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CHRONICLE

OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

FROM THE MSS. OF FRAY ANTONIO AGAPIDA.

BY

WASHINGTON IRVING.

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ac

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH the following chronicle bears the name of the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida, it is more properly a superstructure reared upon the fragments which remain of his work. It may be asked, who is this same Agapida, who is cited with such deference, yet whose name is not to be found in any of the catalogues of Spanish authors? The question is hard to answer: he appears to have been one of the many indefatigable writers, who have filled the libraries of the convents and cathedrals of Spain with their tomes, without ever dreaming of bringing their labours to the press.

He evidently was deeply and accurately informed of the particulars of the wars between his countrymen and the Moors, a tract of history but too much overgrown with the weeds of fable. His glowing zeal, also, in the cause of the catholic faith, entitles him to be held up as a model of the good old orthodox chroniclers, who recorded, with such pious exultation, the united triumphs of the cross and the sword. It is deeply to be regretted, therefore, that his manuscripts, deposited in the libraries of various convents, have been dispersed during the late convulsions in Spain, so that nothing is now to be met of them but disjointed fragments. These, however, are too precious to be suffered to fall into oblivion, as they contain many curious facts not to be found in any other historian. In the following work,

therefore, the manuscripts of the worthy Fray Antonio will be adopted, whenever they exist entire, but will be filled up, extended, illustrated, and corroborated, by citations from various authors, both Spanish and Arabian, who have treated of the subject. The manuscripts themselves are carefully preserved in the library of the Escurial.

Before entering upon the history, it may be as well to notice the opinions of certain of the most learned and devout historiographers of former times relative to this war. Marinus Siculus, historian to Charles the Fifth, pronounces it a war to avenge the ancient injuries received by the Christians from the Moors, to recover the kingdom of Granada, and to extend the name and honour of the Christian religion *.

* Lucio Marino Siculo, Cosas Memorables de España, lib. xx.

Estevan de Garibay, one of the most distinguished among the Spanish historians, regards the war as a special act of divine clemency towards the Moors; to the end, that those barbarians and infidels, who had dragged out so many centuries under the diabolical oppression of the absurd sect of Mahomet, should at length be reduced to the Christian faith*.

Padre Mariana, also, a venerable jesuit, and the most renowned historian of Spain, considers the past domination of the Moors as a scourge inflicted on the Spanish nation for its iniquities; but the triumphant war with Granada as the reward of Heaven, for its great act of propitiation in establishing the glorious tribunal of the inquisition! "No sooner," says the worthy father, "was

* Garibay, Compend. Hist. España, lib. xviii. c. 22.

this holy office opened in Spain, than there instantly shone forth a resplendent light. Then it was, that, through divine favour, the nation increased in power, and became competent to overthrow and trample down the domination of the Moors *."

Having thus cited high and venerable authority for considering this war in the light of one of those pious enterprises denominated crusades, we trust we have said enough to engage the Christian reader to follow us into the field, and to stand by us to the very issue of the contest.

* Mariana, Hist. España, lib. xxv. c. 1.

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A

CHRONICLE

OF THE

CONQUEST OF GRANADA.

CHAPTER I.

Of the kingdom of Granada, and the tribute which it paid to the Castilian crown.

THE history of those desperate and bloody wars, observes Fray Antonio Agapida, which have filled the world with rumour and astonishment, and have determined the fate of mighty empires, has ever been considered as a theme worthy of the pen of the philosopher and the study of the sage. What then must be the history of a holy war, or rather, a pious crusade, waged by the most catholic of sovereigns, for the restoration of the light of the true faith to one of the most beautiful but benighted re-

gions of the globe? Listen, then, while from the solitude of my cell I narrate the events of the conquest of Granada, where Christian knight and turbaned infidel disputed hand to hand every inch of the fair land of Andalusia, until the crescent, that symbol of heathenish abomination, was cast into the dust, and the blessed cross, the tree of our redemption, erected in its stead.

Upwards of eight hundred years were past and gone since the Arabian invaders sealed the perdition of Spain, by the defeat of Don Roderick, the last of her Gothic kings. From the period of that disastrous event, kingdom after kingdom had been gradually recovered by the Christian princes, until the single, but powerful, territory of Granada alone remained under the domination of the Moors.

This renowned kingdom was situate in the southern part of Spain, bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, and defended on the land side by lofty and rugged mountains, locking up within their embraces, deep, rich, and verdant valleys, where the sterility of the surrounding heights was repaid by prodigal fertility.

The city of Granada lay in the centre of the

kingdom, sheltered as it were in the lap of the Sierra Nevada, or chain of snowy mountains. It covered two lofty hills, and a deep valley that divides them, through which flows the river Darro. One of these hills was crowned by the royal palace and fortress of the Alhambra, capable of containing forty thousand men within its walls and towers. There is a Moorish tradition, that the king who built this mighty pile was skilled in the occult sciences, and furnished himself with gold and silver for the purpose by means of alchymy*. Certainly never was there an edifice accomplished in a superior style of barbaric magnificence; and the stranger who, even at the present day, wanders among its silent and deserted courts and ruined halls, gazes with astonishment at its gilded and fretted domes and luxurious decorations, still retaining their brilliancy and beauty, in defiance of the ravages of time.

Opposite to the hill on which stood the Alhambra was its rival hill, on the summit of which was a spacious plain, covered with houses, and crowded with inhabitants. It was

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 42.

commanded by a fortress called the Alcazaba. The declivities and skirts of these hills were covered with houses to the number of seventy thousand, separated by narrow streets and small squares, according to the custom of Moorish cities. The houses had interior courts and gardens, refreshed by fountains and running streams, and set out with oranges, citrons, and pomegranates; so that, as the edifices of the city rose above each other on the sides of the hill, they presented a mingled appearance of city and grove, delightful to the eye. The whole was surrounded by high walls, three leagues in circuit, with twelve gates, and fortified by a thousand and thirty towers. The elevation of the city, and the neighbourhood of the Sierra Nevada, crowned with perpetual snows, tempered the fervid rays of summer; and thus, while other cities were panting with the sultry and stifling heat of the dog-days, the most salubrious breezes played through the marble halls of Granada.

The glory of the city, however, was its vega, or plain, which spread out to a circumference of thirty-seven leagues, surrounded by lofty mountains. It was a vast garden of

delight, refreshed by numerous fountains, and by the silver windings of the Xenil. The labour and ingenuity of the Moors had diverted the waters of this river into thousands of rills and streams, and diffused them over the whole surface of the plain. Indeed they had wrought up this happy region to a degree of wonderful prosperity, and took a pride in decorating it, as if it had been a favourite mistress. The hills were clothed with orchards and vineyards, the valleys embroidered with gardens, and the wide plains covered with waving grain. Here were seen in profusion the orange, the citron, the fig and pomegranate, with large plantations of mulberry trees, from which was produced the finest of silk. The vine clambered from tree to tree, the grapes hung in rich clusters about the peasant's cottage, and the groves were rejoiced by the perpetual song of the nightingale. In a word, so beautiful was the earth, so pure the air, and so serene the sky of this delicious region, that the Moors imagined the paradise of their prophet to be situate in that part of the heaven which overhung the kingdom of Granada*.

* Juan Botero Benes, Relaciones Universales del Mundo.

This rich and populous territory had been left in quiet possession of the infidels, on condition of an annual tribute to the sovereign of Castile and Leon of two thousand doblas or pistoles of gold, and sixteen hundred Christian captives, or, in defect of captives, an equal number of Moors to be surrendered as slaves; all to be delivered in the city of Cordova*.

At the era at which this chronicle commences, Ferdinand and Isabella, of glorious and happy memory, reigned over the united kingdom of Castile, Leon, and Arragon, and Muley Aben Hassan sat on the throne of Granada.

This Muley Aben Hassan had succeeded to his father Ismael in 1465, while Henry IV., brother and immediate predecessor of Queen Isabella, was king of Castile and Leon. He was of the illustrious lineage of Mohammed Aben Alamar, the first Moorish king of Granada, and was the most potent of his line. He had, in fact, augmented in power in consequence of the fall of other Moorish kingdoms, which had been conquered by the Christians. Many cities and strong places of the king-

* Garibay, Compend. lib. iv. c. 25.

doms which lay contiguous to Granada had refused to submit to Christian vassalage, and had sheltered themselves under the protection of Muley Aben Hassan. His territories had thus increased in wealth, extent, and population, beyond all former example; and contained fourteen cities, and ninety-seven fortified towns, besides numerous unwalled towns and villages, defended by formidable castles. The spirit of Muley Aben Hassan swelled with his possessions.

The tribute of money and captives had been regularly paid by his father Ismael, and Muley Aben Hassan had, on one occasion, attended personally in Cordova at the payment. He had witnessed the taunts and sneers of the haughty Castilians, and so indignant was the proud son of Afric at what he considered a degradation of his race, that his blood boiled, whenever he recollected the humiliating scene.

When he came to the throne he ceased all payment of the tribute, and it was sufficient to put him in a transport of rage only to mention it. "He was a fierce and warlike infidel," says the catholic Fray Antonio Agapida; "his

bitterness against the holy Christian faith had been signalized in battle during the lifetime of his father, and the same diabolical spirit of hostility was apparent in his ceasing to pay this most righteous tribute."

CHAPTER II.

How the catholic sovereigns sent to demand arrears of tribute from the Moor, and how the Moor replied.

In the year 1478, a Spanish cavalier of powerful frame and haughty demeanour arrived at the gates of Granada as ambassador from the catholic monarchs, to demand the arrear of tribute. His name was Don Juan de Vera, a zealous and devout knight, full of ardour for the faith and loyalty for the crown. He was gallantly mounted, armed at all points, and followed by a moderate but well-appointed retinue.

The Moorish inhabitants looked jealously at this small but proud array of Spanish chivalry, as it paraded, with that stateliness possessed only by Spanish cavaliers, through the renowned gate of Elvira. They were struck with the stern and lofty demeanour of Don Juan de Vera, and his sinewy frame, which showed him formed for hardy deeds of arms; and they supposed he had come in search of

distinction, by defying the Moorish knights in open tourney, or in the famous tilt with reeds for which they were so renowned. For it was still the custom of the knights of either nation to mingle in these courteous and chivalrous contests, during the intervals of war. When they learned, however, that he was come to demand the tribute so abhorrent to the ears of the fiery monarch, they observed, that it required a warrior of his apparent nerve to execute such an embassy.

Muley Aben Hassan received the cavalier in state, seated on a magnificent divan, and surrounded by the officers of his court, in the hall of ambassadors, one of the most sumptuous apartments of the Alhambra. When De Vera had delivered his message, a haughty and bitter smile curled the lip of the fierce monarch. "Tell your sovereigns," said he, "that the kings of Granada, who used to pay tribute in money to the Castilian crown, are dead. Our mint at present coins nothing but blades of cimeters and heads of lances *."

* Garibay, Compend. lib. xl. c. 29. Conde, Hist. de los Arabes, p. iv. c. 34.

The defiance couched in this proud reply was heard with stern and lofty courtesy by Don Juan de Vera; for he was a bold soldier, and a devout hater of the infidels, and he saw iron war in the words of the Moorish monarch. He retired from the audience chamber with stately and ceremonious gravity, being master of all points of etiquette. As he passed through the court of lions, and paused to regard its celebrated fountain, he fell into a discourse with the Moorish courtiers on certain mysteries of the Christian faith. The arguments advanced by these infidels, says Fray Antonio Agapida, awakened the pious indignation of this most Christian knight and discreet ambassador, but still he restrained himself within the limits of lofty gravity, leaning on the pommel of his sword, and looking down with ineffable scorn upon the weak casuists around him. The quick and subtle Arabian witlings redoubled their light attacks upon that stately Spaniard, and thought they had completely foiled him in the contest; but the stern Juan de Vera had an argument in reserve, for which they were but little prepared; for on one of them, of the race of the Abencerrages, daring

to question, with a sneer, the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin, the catholic knight could no longer restrain his ire. Elevating his voice of a sudden, he told the infidel he lied, and raising his arm at the same time, he smote him on the head with his sheathed sword.

In an instant the court of lions glistened with the flash of arms, and its fountains would have been dyed with blood, had not Muley Aben Hassan overheard the tumult, and forbade all appeal to force, pronouncing the person of the ambassador sacred, while within his territories. The Abencerrage treasured up the remembrance of the insult until an hour of vengeance should arrive, and the ambassador prayed our blessed Lady to grant him an opportunity of proving her immaculate conception on the head of this turbaned infidel *.

Notwithstanding this occurrence, Don Juan de Vera was treated with great distinction by

* The curate of Los Palacios also records this anecdote, but mentions it as happening on a subsequent occasion, when Don Juan de Vera was sent to negotiate for certain Christian captives. There appears every reason, however, to consider Fray Antonio Agapida correct in the period to which he refers it.

Muley Aben Hassan; but nothing could make him unbend from his stern and stately reserve. Before his departure, a cimeter was sent to him by the king; the blade of the finest Damascus steel; the hilt of agate, enriched with precious stones, and the guard of gold. De Vera drew it, and smiled grimly as he noticed the admirable temper of the blade. "His majesty has given me a trenchant weapon," said he: "I trust a time will come, when I may show him, that I know how to use his royal present." The reply was considered as a compliment of course; the bystanders little knew the bitter hostility, that lay couched beneath.

Don Juan de Vera and his companions, during his brief sojourn at Granada, scanned the force and situation of the Moor with the eyes of practised warriors. They saw, that he was well prepared for hostilities. His walls and towers were of vast strength, in complete repair, and mounted with lombards and other heavy ordnance. His magazines were well stored with all the munitions of war: he had a mighty host of foot soldiers, together with squadrons of cavalry, ready to scour the coun-

try, and carry on either defensive or predatory warfare. The Christian warriors noted these things without dismay; their hearts rather glowed with emulation at the thoughts of encountering so worthy a foe. As they slowly pranced through the streets of Granada on their departure, they looked round with eagerness on its stately palaces and sumptuous mosques; on its alcayceria or bazar, crowded with silks and cloth of silver and gold, with jewels and precious stones, and other rich merchandise, the luxuries of every clime; and they longed for the time, when all this wealth should be the spoil of the soldiers of the faith, and when each tramp of their steeds might be fetlock deep in the blood and carnage of the infidels.

Don Juan de Vera and his little band pursued their way slowly through the country to the Christian frontier. Every town was strongly fortified. The vega was studded with towers of refuge for the peasantry; every pass of the mountain had its castle of defence, every lofty height its watchtower. As the Christian cavaliers passed under the walls of the fortresses, lances and cimeters flashed from their battle-

ments, and the turbaned sentinels seemed to dart from their dark eyes glances of hatred and defiance. It was evident, that a war with this kingdom must be one of doughty peril and valiant enterprise; a war of posts, where every step must be gained by toil and bloodshed, and maintained with the utmost difficulty. The warrior spirit of the cavaliers kindled with the thoughts, and they were impatient for hostilities; "not," says Antonio Agapida, "from any thirst for rapine and revenge, but from that pure and holy indignation, which every Spanish knight entertained at beholding this beautiful dominion of his ancestors defiled by the footsteps of infidel usurpers." "It was impossible," he adds, "to contemplate this delicious country, and not long to see it restored to the dominion of the true faith, and the sway of the Christian monarchs."

CHAPTER III.

How the Moor determined to strike the first blow in the war.

The defiance, thus hurled at the Castilian sovereigns by the fiery Moorish king, would at once have been answered by the thunder of their artillery, but they were embroiled at that time in a war with Portugal, and in contests with their own factious nobles. The truce, therefore, which had existed for many years between the nations, was suffered to continue; the wary Ferdinand reserving the refusal to pay tribute as a fair ground for war, whenever the favourable moment to wage it should arrive.

In the course of three years the war with Portugal was terminated, and the factions of the Spanish nobles were for the most part quelled. The Castilian sovereigns now turned their thoughts to what, from the time of the union of their crowns, had been the great object of their ambition, the conquest of Granada,

and the complete extirpation of the Moorish power from Spain. Ferdinand, whose pious zeal was quickened by motives of temporal policy, looked with a craving eye at the rich territory of the Moor, studded with innumerable towns and cities. He determined to carry on the war with cautious and persevering patience, taking town after town, and fortress after fortress, and gradually plucking away all the supports, before he attempted the Moorish capital. "I will pick out the seeds one by one of this pomegranate," said the wary Ferdinand *.

Muley Aben Hassan was aware of the hostile intentions of the catholic monarch, but felt confident in his means of resisting them. He had amassed great wealth during a tranquil reign; he had strengthened the defences of his kingdom, and had drawn large bodies of auxiliary troops from Barbary, besides making arrangements with the African princes to assist him with supplies in case of emergency. His subjects were fierce of spirit, stout of heart, and valiant of hand. Inured to the exercise

* Granada is the Spanish term for pomegranate.

of war, they could fight skilfully on foot, but above all were dexterous horsemen, whether heavily armed and fully appointed, or lightly mounted, *a la geneta*, with simply lance and target. They were patient of fatigue, hunger, thirst, and nakedness; prompt for war at the first summons of their king, and tenacious in defence of their towns and possessions.

Thus amply provided for war, Muley Aben Hassan determined to be beforehand with the politic Ferdinand, and to be the first to strike a blow. In the truce which existed between them there was a singular clause, permitting either party to make sudden inroads and assaults upon towns and fortresses, provided they were done furtively and by stratagem, without display of banners, or sound of trumpet, or regular encampment, and that they did not last above three days*. This gave rise to frequent enterprises of a hardy and adventurous character, in which castles and strong holds were taken by surprise, and carried sword in hand. A long time had elapsed, however, without any outrage of the kind on

* Zurita, Anales de Arragon, l. xx. c. 41. Mariana, Hist. de España, l. xxv. c. 1.

the part of the Moors, and the Christian towns on the frontier had all, in consequence, fallen into a state of the most negligent security.

Muley Aben Hassan cast his eyes round to select his object of attack, when information was brought him that the fortress of Zahara was but feebly garrisoned and scantily supplied, and that its alcayde was careless of his charge. This important post was on the frontier, between Ronda and Medina Sidonia, and was built on the crest of a rocky mountain, with a strong castle perched above it, upon a cliff so high that it was said to be above the flight of birds or drift of clouds. The streets, and many of the houses, were mere excavations, wrought out of the living rock. The town had but one gate, opening to the west, and defended by towers and bulwarks. The only ascent to this cragged fortress was by roads cut in the rock, and so rugged as in many places to resemble broken stairs. Such was the situation of the mountain fortress of Zahara, which seemed to set all attack at defiance, insomuch that it had become so proverbial throughout Spain, that a woman of forbidding and inaccessible virtue was called

a Zahareña. But the strongest fortress and sternest virtue have their weak points, and require unremitting vigilance to guard them: let warrior and dame take warning from the fate of Zahara.

CHAPTER IV.

Expedition of Muley Aben Hassan against the fortress of Zahara.

It was in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and eighty-one, and but a night or two after the festival of the most blessed Nativity, that Muley Aben Hassan made his famous attack upon Zahara. The inhabitants of the place were sunk in profound sleep; the very sentinel had deserted his post, and sought shelter from a tempest, which had raged for three nights in succession; for it appeared but little probable, that an enemy would be abroad during such an uproar of the elements. But evil spirits work best during a storm, observes the worthy Antonio Agapida; and Muley Aben Hassan found such a season most suitable for his diabolical purposes. In the midst of the night an uproar arose within the walls of Zahara, more awful than the raging of the storm. A fearful alarm-cry, "The Moor! the Moor!" resounded through

the streets, mingled with the clash of arms, the shriek of anguish, and the shout of victory. Muley Aben Hassan, at the head of a powerful force, had hurried from Granada, and passed unobserved through the mountains in the obscurity of the tempest. When the storm pelted the sentinel from his post, and howled round tower and battlement, the Moors had planted their scaling ladders, and mounted securely into both town and castle. The garrison was unsuspicious of danger until battle and massacre burst forth within its very walls. It seemed to the affrighted inhabitants, as if the fiends of the air had come upon the wings of the wind, and possessed themselves of tower and turret. The war cry resounded on every side, shout answering shout, above, below, on the battlements of the castle, in the streets of the town; the foe was in all parts, wrapped in obscurity, but acting in concert by the aid of preconcerted signals. Starting from sleep, the soldiers were intercepted and cut down as they rushed from their quarters, or if they escaped, they knew not where to assemble or where to strike. Wherever lights appeared, the flashing cimeter was at its deadly work,

and all who attempted resistance fell beneath its edge.

In a little while the struggle was at an end. Those who were not slain took refuge in the secret places of their houses, or gave themselves up as captives. The clash of arms ceased, and the storm continued its howling, mingled with the occasional shout of the Moorish soldiery, roaming in search of plunder. While the inhabitants were trembling for their fate, a trumpet resounded through the streets, summoning them all to assemble, unarmed, in the public square. Here they were surrounded by soldiery, and strictly guarded until daybreak. When the day dawned, it was piteous to behold this once prosperous community, which had lain down to rest in peaceful security, now crowded together, without distinction of age, or rank, or sex, and almost without raiment during the severity of a wintry storm. The fierce Muley Aben Hassan turned a deaf ear to all their prayers and remonstrances, and ordered them to be conducted captives to Granada. Leaving a strong garrison in both town and castle, with orders to put them in a complete state of defence, he

returned flushed with victory to his capital, entering it at the head of his troops, laden with spoil, and bearing in triumph the banners and pennons taken at Zahara.

While preparations were making for jousts and other festivities in honour of this victory over the Christians, the captives of Zahara arrived; a wretched train of men, women, and children, worn out with fatigue and haggard with despair, and driven like cattle into the city gates by a detachment of Moorish soldiery.

Deep were the grief and indignation of the people of Granada at this cruel scene. Old men, who had experienced the calamities of warfare, anticipated coming troubles. Mothers clasped their infants to their breasts, as they beheld the hapless females of Zahara, with their children expiring in their arms. On every side the accents of pity for the sufferers were mingled with execrations of the barbarity of the king. The preparations for festivity were neglected, and the viands, which were to have feasted the conquerors, were distributed among the captives.

The nobles and alfaquis, however, repaired to the Alhambra to congratulate the king: for

whatever storm may rage in the lower regions of society, rarely do any clouds, but clouds of incense, rise to the awful eminence of the throne. In this instance, however, a voice rose from the midst of the obsequious crowd, that burst like thunder upon the ears of Aben Hassan. "Wo! wo! wo! to Granada!" exclaimed the voice, "its hour of desolation approaches! The ruins of Zahara will fall upon our heads: my spirit tells me, that the end of our empire is at hand!" All shrunk back aghast, and left the denouncer of wo standing alone in the centre of the hall. He was an ancient and hoary man, in the rude attire of a dervise. Age had withered his form without quenching the fire of his spirit, which glared in baleful lustre from his eyes. He was, say the Arabian historians, one of those holy men termed santons, who pass their lives in hermitages, in fasting, meditation, and prayer, until they attain to the purity of saints and the foresight of prophets. "He was," says the indignant Fray Antonio Agapida, "a son of Belial, one of those fanatic infidels possessed of the devil, who are sometimes permitted to predict the truth to their followers;

but with the proviso, that their predictions shall be of no avail."

The voice of the santon resounded through the lofty hall of the Alhambra, and struck silence and awe into the crowd of courtly sycophants. Muley Aben Hassan alone was unmoved. He eyed the hoary anchoret with scorn as he stood dauntless before him, and treated his predictions as the raving of a maniac. The santon rushed from the royal presence, and descending into the city, hurried through its streets and squares with frantic gesticulations. His voice was heard in every part in awful denunciation. "The peace is broken, the exterminating war is commenced. Wo! wo! wo! to Granada! its fall is at hand! desolation shall dwell in its palaces, its strong men shall fall beneath the sword, its children and maidens shall be led into captivity! Zahara is but a type of Granada!"

Terror seized upon the populace; for they considered these ravings as the inspirations of prophecy. They hid themselves in their dwellings, as in a time of general mourning; or, if they went abroad, it was to gather together in knots in the streets and squares, to

alarm each other with dismal forebodings, and to curse the rashness and cruelty of the fierce Aben Hassan.

The Moorish monarch heeded not their murmurs. Knowing that his exploit must draw upon him the vengeance of the Christians, he now threw off all reserve, and made attempts to surprise Castellar and Olvera, though without success. He sent alfaquis also to the Barbary powers, informing them, that the sword was drawn, and inviting them, to aid in maintaining the kingdom of Granada, and the religion of Mahomet, against the violence of unbelievers.

CHAPTER V.

Expedition of the Marquis of Cadiz against Alhama.

GREAT was the indignation of King Ferdinand, when he heard of the storming of Zahara, more especially as it anticipated his intention of giving the first blow in this eventful war. He valued himself upon his deep and prudent policy; and there is nothing which politic monarchs can less forgive, than thus being forestalled by an adversary. He immediately issued orders to all the adelantados and alcaydes of the frontiers to maintain the utmost vigilance at their several posts, and to prepare to carry fire and sword into the territories of the Moors, while he despatched friars of different orders, to stir up the chivalry of Christendom to take part in this holy crusade against the infidels.

Among the many valiant cavaliers who rallied round the throne of Ferdinand and Isabella, one of the most eminent in rank and

renowned in arms was Don Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz. As he was the distinguished champion of this holy war, and commanded in most of its enterprises and battles, it is meet that some particular account should be given of him. He was born in 1443, of the valiant lineage of the Ponces, and from his earliest youth had rendered himself illustrious in the field. He was of the middle stature, with a muscular and powerful frame, capable of great exertion and fatigue. His hair and beard were red and curled, his countenance was open and magnanimous, of a ruddy complexion, and slightly marked with the smallpox. He was temperate, chaste, valorous, vigilant; a just and generous master to his vassals; frank and noble in his deportment towards his equals; loving and faithful to his friends; fierce and terrible, yet magnanimous, to his enemies. He was considered the mirror of chivalry of his times, and compared by contemporary historians to the immortal Cid.

The Marquis of Cadiz had vast possessions in the most fertile parts of Andalusia, including many towns and castles; and could lead forth

an army into the field from his own vassals and dependents. On receiving the orders of the king, he burned to signalize himself by some sudden incursion into the kingdom of Granada, that should give a brilliant commencement to the war, and console the sovereigns for the insult they had received on the capture of Zahara. As his estates lay near the Moorish frontiers, and were subject to sudden inroads, he had always in his pay numbers of adalides, or scouts and guides, many of them converted Moors. These he sent out in all directions, to watch the movements of the enemy, and to procure all kinds of information important to the security of the frontier. One of these spies came to him one day in his town of Marchena, and informed him, that the Moorish town of Alhama was slightly garrisoned and negligently guarded, and might be taken by surprise. This was a large, wealthy, and populous place, within a few leagues of Granada. It was situate on a rocky height, nearly surrounded by a river, and defended by a fortress, to which there was no access but by a steep and cragged ascent. The strength of its situation, and its being imbosomed in

the centre of the kingdom, had produced the careless security which now invited attack.

"To ascertain fully the state of the fortress, the marquis secretly despatched thither a veteran soldier who was highly in his confidence. His name was Ortega de Prado; a man of great activity, shrewdness, and valour, and captain of escaladores, or those employed to scale the walls of fortresses in time of attack. Ortega approached Alhama one moonless night, and paced along its walls with noiseless step, laying his ear occasionally to the ground or to the wall. Every time he distinguished the measured tread of a sentinel, and now and then the challenge of the nightwatch going its rounds. Finding the town thus guarded, he clambered to the castle. There all was silent: as he ranged its lofty battlements, between him and the sky, he saw no sentinel on duty. He noticed certain places where the wall might be ascended by scaling ladders; and having marked the hour of relieving guard, and made all necessary observations, he retired without being discovered.

Ortega returned to Marchena, and assured the Marquis of Cadiz of the practicability of

scaling the castle of Alhama, and taking it by surprise. The marquis had a secret conference with Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Diego de Merlo, commander of Seville, and Sancho de Avila, alcayde of Carmona, who all agreed to aid him with their forces. On an appointed day the several commanders assembled at Marchena with their troops and retainers. None but the leaders knew the object or destination of the enterprise, but it was enough to rouse the Andalusian spirit to know that a foray was intended into the country of their old enemies the Moors. Secrecy and celerity were necessary for success. They set out promptly, with three thousand genetes or light cavalry, and four thousand infantry. They chose a route but little travelled, by the way of Antiquera, passing with great labour through rugged and solitary defiles of the sierra or chain of mountains of Alzerifa, and left all their baggage on the banks of the river Yeguas, to be brought after them. Their march was principally in the night; all day they remained quiet; no noise was suffered in their camp, and no fires were made, lest the smoke should betray them. On

the third day they resumed their march as the evening darkened, and forcing themselves forward at as quick a pace as the rugged and dangerous mountain roads would permit, they descended towards midnight into a small deep valley, only half a league from Alhama. Here they made a halt, fatigued by this forced march during a long dark evening towards the end of February.

The Marquis of Cadiz now explained to the troops the object of the expedition. He told them, it was for the glory of the most holy faith, and to avenge the wrongs of their countrymen of Zahara; and that the rich town of Alhama, full of wealthy spoil, was the place to be attacked. The troops were roused to new ardour by these words, and desired to be led forthwith to the assault. They arrived close to Alhama about two hours before daybreak. Here the army remained in ambush, while three hundred men were despatched to scale the walls and take possession of the castle. They were picked men, many of them alcaydes and officers, men who preferred death to dishonour. This gallant band was guided by the escalador, Ortega de Prado, at the head of thirty men with

scaling ladders. They clambered the ascent to the castle in silence, and arrived under the dark shadow of its towers without being discovered. Not a light was to be seen, not a sound to be heard; the whole place was wrapped in profound repose.

Fixing their ladders, they ascended cautiously and with noiseless steps. Ortega was the first that mounted upon the battlements, followed by one Martin Galindo, a youthful squire, full of spirit and eager for distinction. Moving stealthily along the parapet to the portal of the citadel, they came upon the sentinel by surprise. Ortega seized him by the throat, brandished a dagger before his eyes, and ordered him to point the way to the guard-room. The infidel obeyed, and was instantly despatched, to prevent his giving any alarm. The guard-room was a scene rather of massacre than combat. Some of the soldiery were killed while sleeping, others were cut down almost without resistance, bewildered by so unexpected an assault: all were despatched, for the scaling party was too small to make prisoners or to spare. The alarm spread throughout the castle; but by this time the three hundred

picked men had mounted the battlements. The garrison, startled from sleep, found the enemy already masters of the towers. Some of the Moors were cut down at once, others ought desperately from room to room, and the whole castle resounded with the clash of arms, the cries of the combatants, and the groans of the wounded. The army in ambush, finding by the uproar that the castle was surprised, now rushed from their concealment, and approached the walls with loud shouts and sound of kettledrums and trumpets, to increase the confusion and dismay of the garrison. A violent conflict took place in the court of the castle, where several of the scaling party sought to throw open the gates to admit their countrymen. Here fell two valiant alcaydes, Nicholas de Roja and Sancho de Avila, but they fell honourably, upon a heap of slain. At length Ortega de Prado succeeded in throwing open a postern, through which the Marquis of Cadiz, the adelantado of Andalusia, and Don Diego de Merlo entered with a host of followers, and the citadel remained in full possession of the Christians.

As the Spanish cavaliers were ranging from

room to room, the Marquis of Cadiz, entering an apartment of superior richness to the rest, beheld, by the light of a silver lamp, a beautiful Moorish female, the wife of the alcayde of the castle, whose husband was absent, attending a wedding feast at Velez Malaga. She would have fled at the sight of a Christian warrior in her apartment, but, entangled in the covering of the bed, she fell at the feet of the marquis, imploring mercy. The Christian cavalier, who had a soul full of honour and courtesy towards the sex, raised her from the earth, and endeavoured to allay her fears; but they were increased at the sight of her female attendants, pursued into the room by the Spanish soldiery. The marquis reproached his soldiers with their unmanly conduct, and reminded them, that they made war upon men, not on defenceless women. Having soothed the terrors of the females by the promise of honourable protection, he appointed a trusty guard to watch over the security of their apartment.

The castle was now taken, but the town below it was in arms. It was broad day, and the people, recovered from their panic, were

enabled to see and estimate the force of the enemy. The inhabitants were chiefly merchants and trades-people; but the Moors all possessed a knowledge of the use of weapons, and were of brave and warlike spirit. They confided in the strength of their walls, and the certainty of speedy relief from Granada, which was but about eight leagues distant. Manning the battlements and towers, they discharged showers of stones and arrows, whenever the part of the Christian army without the walls attempted to approach. They barricadoed the entrances of their streets also, which opened towards the castle, stationing men expert at the crossbow and arquebuse. These kept up a constant fire upon the gate of the castle, so that no one could sally forth without being instantly wounded or killed. Two valiant cavaliers, who attempted to lead forth a party in defiance of this fatal tempest, were shot dead at the very portal.

The Christians now found themselves in a situation of great peril. Reinforcements must soon arrive to the enemy from Granada. Unless, therefore, they gained possession of the town in the course of the day, they were likely

to be surrounded and beleaguered, and with scarcely any provisions in the castle. Some observed, that, even if they took the town, they should not be able to keep possession of it. They proposed, therefore, to make booty of every thing valuable, to sack the castle, set it on fire, and make good their retreat to Seville.

The Marquis of Cadiz was of different council. "God has given the citadel into Christian hands," said he; "he will no doubt strengthen them to maintain it. We have gained the place with difficulty and bloodshed; it would be a stain upon our honour to abandon it through fear of imaginary dangers." The adelantado and Don Diego de Merlo joined in his opinion; but, without their earnest and united remonstrances, the place would have been abandoned; so exhausted were the troops by forced marches and hard fighting, and so apprehensive of the approach of the Moors of Granada.

The strength and spirits of the party within the castle were in some degree restored by the provisions which they found. The Christian army beneath the town, being also refreshed by a morning repast, advanced vi-

gorously to the attack of the walls. They planted their scaling ladders, and, swarming up, fought fiercely with the Moorish soldiery upon the ramparts,

In the mean time, the Marquis of Cadiz, seeing that the gate of the castle which opened toward the city was completely commanded by the artillery of the enemy, ordered a large breach to be made in the wall, through which he might lead his troops to the attack; animating them in this perilous moment by assuring them, that the place should be given up to plunder, and its inhabitants made captives.

The breach being made, the marquis put himself at the head of his troops, and entered sword in hand. A simultaneous attack was made by the Christians in every part, by the ramparts, by the gate, by the roofs and walls which connected the castle with the town. The Moors fought valiantly in their streets, from their windows, and from the tops of their houses. They were not equal to the Christians in bodily strength; for they were for the most part peaceful men, of industrious callings, and enervated by the frequent use of the warm bath; but they were superior in number, and

unconquerable in spirit; old and young, strong and weak, fought with the same desperation. The Moors fought for property, for liberty, for life. They fought at their thresholds and their hearths, with the shrieks of their wives and children ringing in their ears, and they fought in the hope, that each moment would bring aid from Granada. They regarded neither their own wounds nor the deaths of their companions, but continued fighting until they fell; and seemed as if, when they could no longer contend, they would block up the thresholds of their beloved homes with their mangled bodies. The Christians fought for glory, for revenge, for the holy faith, and for the spoil of these wealthy infidels. Success would place a rich town at their mercy, failure would deliver them into the hands of the tyrant of Granada.

The contest raged from morning until night, when the Moors began to yield. Retreating to a large mosque near the walls, they kept up so galling a fire from it with lances, cross-bows, and arquebusès, that for some time the Christians dared not approach. Covering themselves at length, with bucklers and man-

telets *, to protect them from the deadly shower, they made their way to the mosque, and set fire to the doors. When the smoke and flames rolled in upon them, the Moors gave all up as lost. Many rushed forth desperately upon the enemy, but were immediately slain; the rest surrendered.

The struggle was now at an end; the town remained at the mercy of the Christians; and the inhabitants, both male and female, became slaves of those who made them prisoners. Some few escaped by a mine or subterranean way which led to the river, and concealed themselves, their wives and children, in caves and secret places; but in three or four days were compelled to surrender themselves through hunger.

The town was given up to plunder, and the booty was immense. There were found prodigious quantities of gold, and silver, and jewels, and rich silks, and costly stuffs of all kinds, together with horses and beeves, and abundance of grain, and oil, and honey, and all

* Mantelet is a movable parapet, made of thick planks, to protect troops when advancing to sap or assault a walled place.

other productions of this fruitful kingdom; for in Alhama was collected the royal rents and tributes of the surrounding country: it was the richest town in the Moorish territory, and from its great strength and its peculiar situation was called the key to Granada.

Great waste and devastation were committed by the Spanish soldiery; for, thinking it would be impossible to keep possession of the place, they began to demolish whatever they could not take away. Immense jars of oil were destroyed, costly furniture shattered to pieces, and magazines of grain broken open, and their contents scattered to the winds. Many Christian captives, who had been taken at Zahara, were found buried in a Moorish dungeon, and were triumphantly restored to light and liberty, and a renegado Spaniard, who had often served as guide to the Moors in their incursions into the Christian territories, was hanged on the highest part of the battlements, for the edification of the army.

CHAPTER VI.

How the people of Granada were affected on hearing of the capture of Alhamá, and how the Moorish king sallied forth to regain it.

A Moorish horesman had spurred across the vega, nor did he rein his panting steed until he alighted at the gate of the Alhambra. He brought tidings to Muley Aben Hassan of the attack upon Alhama. "The Christians," said he, "are in the land. They came upon us, we know not whence or how; and scaled the walls of the castle in the night. There has been dreadful fighting and carnage on its towers and courts; and when I spurred my steed from the gate of Alhama, the castle was in possession of the unbelievers."

Muley Aben Hassan felt for a moment as if swift retribution had come upon him for the woes he had inflicted upon Zahara. Still he flattered himself, that this had only been some transient inroad of a party of marauders, in-

tent upon plunder; and that a little succour thrown into the town would be sufficient to expel them from the castle, and drive them from the land. He ordered out, therefore, a thousand of his chosen cavalry, and sent them in all speed to the assistance of Alhama. They arrived before its walls the morning after its capture. The Christian standards floated upon the towers, and a body of cavalry poured forth from its gates, and came wheeling down into the plain to receive them.

The Moorish horsemen turned the reins of their steeds, and galloped back for Granada. They entered its gates in tumultuous confusion, spreading terror and lamentation by their tidings. "Alhama is fallen! Alhama is fallen!" exclaimed they; "the Christians garrison its walls; the key of Granada is in the hands of the enemy!"

When the people heard these words, they remembered the denunciation of the santon: his prediction seemed still to resound in every ear, and its fulfilment to be at hand. Nothing was heard throughout the city but sighs and wailings. "Wo is me, Alhama!" was in every

mouth, and this ejaculation of deep sorrow and doleful foreboding came to be the burden of a plaintive ballad, which remains to the present day*.

Many aged men, who had taken refuge in Granada from other Moorish dominions which had fallen into the power of the Christians, now groaned in despair at the thought, that war was to follow them into this last retreat, to lay waste this pleasant land, and to bring trouble and sorrow upon their declining years. The women were more loud and vehement in their grief, for they beheld the evils impending over their children, and what can restrain the agony of a mother's heart? Many of them made their way through the halls of the Alhambra into the presence of the king, weeping, and wailing, and tearing their hair. "Accursed be the day," cried they, "when the flame of war was kindled by thee in our land! May the holy prophet bear witness before Allah, that we and our children are innocent of this act! Upon thy head, and upon the heads of

* The mournful little Spanish romance of *Ay de mi, Alhama!* is supposed to be of Moorish origin, and to imbody the grief of the people of Granada on this occasion.

thy posterity, to the end of the world, rest the sin of the desolation of Zahara*!"

Muley Aben Hassan remained unmoved amidst all this storm: his heart was hardened, observes Fray Antonio Agapida, like that of Pharaoh, to the end, that through his blind violence and rage he might produce the deliverance of the land from its heathen bondage. In fact, he was a bold and fearless warrior; and trusted soon to make this blow recoil upon the head of the enemy. He had ascertained, that the captors of Alhama were but a handful; they were in the centre of his dominions, within a short distance of his capital. They were deficient in munitions of war, and provisions for sustaining a siege. By a rapid movement he might surround them with a powerful army, cut off all aid from their countrymen, and entrap them in the fortress they had taken.

To think was to act, with Muley Aben Hassan; but he was prone to act with too much precipitation. He immediately set forth in person, with three thousand horse and fifty thousand foot, and, in his eagerness to arrive

* Garibay, lib. xl, c. 29.

at the scene of action, would not wait to provide artillery and the various engines required in a siege. "The multitude of my forces," said he, confidently, "will be sufficient to overwhelm the enemy."

The Marquis of Cadiz, who thus held possession of Alhama, had a chosen friend and faithful companion in arms among the most distinguished of the Christian chivalry. This was Don Alonzo de Cordova, senior and lord of the house of Aguilar, and brother of Gonsalvo of Cordova, afterwards renowned as the grand captain of Spain. As yet Alonzo de Aguilar was the glory of his name and race; for his brother was but young in arms. He was one of the most hardy, valiant, and enterprising Spanish knights, and foremost in all service of a perilous and adventurous nature. He had not been at hand to accompany his friend Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, in his inroad into the Moorish territory; but he hastily assembled a number of retainers, horse and foot, and pressed forward to join the enterprise. Arriving at the river Feguas, he found the baggage of the army still upon its banks, and took

charge of it to carry it to Alhama. The Marquis of Cadiz heard of the approach of his friend, whose march was slow, in consequence of being encumbered by the baggage. He was within but a few leagues of Alhama, when scouts came hurrying into the place with intelligence, that the Moorish king was at hand with a powerful army. The Marquis of Cadiz was filled with alarm, lest De Aguilar should fall into the hands of the enemy. Forgetting his own danger, and thinking only of that of his friend, he despatched a well mounted messenger to ride full speed and warn him not to approach.

The first determination of Alonzo de Aguilar, when he heard that the Moorish king was at hand, was to take a strong position in the mountains, and await his coming. The madness of an attempt with his handful of men to oppose an immense army was represented to him with such force, as to induce him to abandon the idea. He then thought of throwing himself into Alhama, to share the fortunes of his friend. But it was now too late. The Moor would infallibly intercept him, and he should only give

the marquis the additional distress of beholding him captured beneath his walls. It was even urged upon him, that he had no time for delay, if he would consult his own safety, which could only be ensured by an immediate retreat into the Christian territory. This last opinion was confirmed by the return of scouts, who brought information, that Muley Aben Hassan had received notice of his movements, and was rapidly advancing in quest of him. It was with infinite reluctance that Don Alonzo de Aguilar yielded to these united and powerful reasons. Proudly and sullenly he drew off his forces, laden with the baggage of the army, and made an unwilling retreat towards Antequera. Muley Aben Hassan pursued him for some distance through the mountains, but soon gave up the chase, and turned with his forces upon Alhama.

As the army approached the town, they beheld the fields strewn with the dead bodies of their countrymen, who had fallen in defence of the place, and had been cast forth and left unburied by the Christians. There they lay, mangled and exposed to every indignity, while droves of half-famished dogs were preying

upon them, and fighting and howling over their hideous repast*. Furious at the sight, the Moors, in the first transports of their rage, attacked these ravenous animals, and their next measure was to vent their fury upon the Christians. They rushed like madmen to the walls, applied scaling ladders in all parts, without waiting for the necessary mantelets and other protections, thinking, by attacking suddenly and at various points, to distract the enemy, and overcome them by the force of numbers.

The Marquis of Cadiz with his confederate commanders distributed themselves along the walls, to direct and animate their men in the defence. The Moors, in their blind fury, often assailed the most difficult and dangerous places. Darts, stones, and all kinds of missiles were hurled down upon their unprotected heads. As fast as they mounted they were cut down, or dashed from the battlements, their ladders overturned, and all who were on them precipitated headlong below.

Muley Aben Hassan stormed with passion at the sight: he sent detachment after detach-

* Pulgar, Cronica.

ment to scale the walls; but in vain: they were like waves rushing upon a rock only to dash themselves to pieces. The Moors lay in heaps beneath the wall, and among them many of the bravest cavaliers of Granada. The Christians, also, sallied frequently from the gates, and made great havoc in the irregular multitude of assailants. On one of these occasions the party was commanded by Don Juan de Vera, the same pious and high-handed knight who had borne the embassy to Muley Aben Hassan demanding tribute. As this doughty cavalier, after a career of carnage, was slowly retreating to the gate, he heard a voice calling after him in furious accents. "Turn back! turn back!" cried the voice: "thou, who canst insult in hall, prove, that thou canst combat in the field." Don Juan de Vera turned, and beheld the same Abencerrage whom he had struck with his sword in the Alhambra, for scoffing at the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin. All his holy zeal and pious indignation rekindled at the sight: he put lance in rest, and spurred his steed, to finish this doctrinal dispute. Don Juan was a potent and irresistible arguer with his weapon; and

he was aided, says Fray Antonio Agapida, by the peculiar virtue of his cause. At the very first encounter, his lance entered the mouth of the Moor, and hurled him to the earth, never more to utter word or breath. Thus, continues the worthy friar, did this scoffing infidel receive a well-merited punishment through the very organ with which he had offended, and thus was the immaculate conception miraculously vindicated from his foul aspersions.

The vigorous and successful defence of the Christians now made Muley Aben Hassan sensible of his error, in hurrying from Granada without the proper engines for a siege. Destitute of all means to batter the fortifications, the town remained uninjured, defying the mighty army which raged in vain before it. Incensed at being thus foiled, Muley Aben Hassan gave orders to undermine the walls. The Moors advanced with shouts to the attempt. They were received with a deadly fire from the ramparts, which drove them from their works. Repeatedly were they repulsed, and repeatedly did they return to the charge. The Christians not merely galled them from the battlements, but issued forth and cut them

down in the excavations they were attempting to form. The contest lasted a whole day, and by evening two thousand Moors were either killed or wounded.

Muley Aben Hassan now abandoned all hope of carrying the place by assault; and attempted to distress it into terms, by turning the channel of the river which runs by its walls. On this stream the inhabitants depended for their supply of water, the place being destitute of fountains and cisterns, from which circumstance it is called Alhama *la seca*, or "the dry."

A desperate conflict ensued on the banks of the river; the Moors endeavouring to plant palisadoes in its bed, to divert the stream, and the Christians striving to prevent them. The Spanish commanders exposed themselves to the utmost danger to animate their men, who were repeatedly driven back into the town. The Marquis of Cadiz was often up to his knees in the stream, fighting hand to hand with the Moors. The water ran red with blood, and was encumbered with dead bodies. At length the overwhelming numbers of the Moors gave them the advantage, and they

succeeded in diverting the greater part of the water. The Christians had to struggle severely to supply themselves from the feeble rill which remained. They sallied to the river by a subterraneous passage; but the Moorish cross-bowmen stationed themselves on the opposite bank, keeping up a heavy fire upon the Christians, whenever they attempted to fill their vessels from the scanty and turbid stream. One party of the Christians had therefore to fight, while another drew water. At all hours of day and night this deadly strife was maintained, until it seemed as if every drop of water were purchased with a drop of blood.

In the mean time the sufferings in the town became intense. None but the soldiery and their horses were allowed the precious beverage so dearly earned, and even that in quantities that only tantalized their wants. The wounded, who could not sally to procure it, were almost destitute; while the unhappy prisoners, shut up in the mosques, were reduced to frightful extremities. Many perished raving mad, fancying themselves swimming in boundless seas, yet unable to assuage their thirst. Many of the soldiers lay parched and

panting along the battlements, no longer able to draw a bowstring or hurl a stone, while above five thousand Moors, stationed upon a rocky height which overlooked part of the town, kept up a galling fire into it with slings and crossbows; so that the Marquis of Cadiz was obliged to heighten the battlements by using the doors from the private dwellings.

The Christian cavaliers, exposed to this extreme peril, and in imminent danger of falling into the hands of the enemy, despatched fleet messengers to Seville and Cordova, entreating the chivalry of Andalusia to hasten to their aid. They sent likewise to implore assistance from the king and queen, who at that time held their court in Medina del Campo. In the midst of their distress, a tank, or cistern of water, was fortunately discovered in the city, which gave temporary relief to their sufferings.

CHAPTER VII.

How the Duke of Medina Sidonia and the chivalry of Andalusia hastened to the relief of Alhama.

THE perilous situation of the Christian cavaliers, pent up and beleaguered within the walls of Alhama, spread terror among their friends, and anxiety throughout all Andalusia. Nothing, however, could equal the anguish of the Marchioness of Cadiz, the wife of the gallant Roderigo Ponce de Leon. In her deep distress she looked round for some powerful noble, who had the means of rousing the country to the assistance of her husband. No one appeared more competent for the purpose than Don Juan de Guzman, the Duke of Medina Sidonia. He was one of the most wealthy and puissant grandees of Spain; his possessions extended over some of the most fertile parts of Andalusia, embracing towns and seaports, and numerous villages. Here he reigned in feudal state like a petty sovereign, and

could at any time bring into the field an immense force of vassals and retainers. The Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Cadiz, however, were at this time deadly foes. An hereditary feud existed between them, that had often arisen to bloodshed and war; for as yet the fierce contests between the proud and puissant Spanish nobles had not been completely quelled by the power of the crown, and in this respect they exerted a right of sovereignty, in leading their vassals against each other in open field.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia would have appeared to many the very last person to whom to apply for aid of the Marquis of Cadiz; but the marchioness judged of him by the standard of her own high and generous mind. She knew him to be a gallant and courteous knight, and had already experienced the magnanimity of his spirit, having been relieved by him when besieged by the Moors in her husband's fortress of Arcos. To the duke, therefore, she applied in this moment of sudden calamity, imploring him to furnish succour to her husband. The event showed how well noble spirits understand each other.

No sooner did the duke receive this appeal from the wife of his enemy, than he generously forgot all feeling of animosity, and determined to go in person to his succour. He immediately despatched a courteous letter to the marchioness, assuring her, that, in consideration of the request of so honourable and estimable a lady, and to rescue from peril so valiant a cavalier as her husband, whose loss would be great, not only to Spain, but to all Christendom, he would forego the recollection of all past grievances, and hasten to his relief with all the forces he could raise.

The duke wrote at the same time to the alcaydes of his towns and fortresses, ordering them to join him forthwith at Seville, with all the force they could spare from their garrisons. He called on all the chivalry of Andalusia to make a common cause in the rescue of those Christian cavaliers, and he offered large pay to all volunteers who would resort to him with horses, armour, and provisions. Thus all who could be incited by honour, religion, patriotism, or thirst of gain, were induced to hasten to his standard; and he took the field with an army of five thousand horse and fifty

thousand foot*. Many cavaliers of distinguished name accompanied him in this generous enterprise. Among these was the redoubtable Alonzo de Aguilar, the chosen friend of the Marquis of Cadiz, and with him his younger brother, Gonsalvo Fernandez de Cordova, afterwards renowned as the grand captain; Don Rodrigo Givon, also, master of the order of Calatrava, together with Martin Alonzo de Montemayor, and the Marquis de Villena, esteemed the best lance in Spain. It was a gallant and splendid army, comprising the power of Spanish chivalry, and poured forth in brilliant array from the gates of Seville, bearing the great standard of that ancient and renowned city.

Ferdinand and Isabella were at Medina del Campo when tidings came of the capture of Alhama. The king was at mass when he received the news, and ordered *Te Deum* to be chanted for this signal triumph of the holy faith. When the first flush of triumph had subsided, and the king learned the imminent peril of the valorous Ponce de Leon and his

* Cronica de los Duques de Medina Sidonia, por Pedro de Medina. MS.

companions, and the great danger there was that this strong hold might again be wrested from their grasp, he resolved to hurry in person to the scene of action. So pressing appeared to him the emergency, that he barely gave himself time to take a hasty repast while horses were providing, and then departed at furious speed for Andalusia, leaving a request for the queen to follow him*. He was attended by Don Beltran de la Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque; Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla; and Don Pedro Manriquez, Count of Trevino, with a few more cavaliers of prowess and distinction. He travelled by forced journeys, frequently changing his jaded horses, being eager to arrive in time to take command of the Andalusian chivalry. When he came within five leagues of Cordova, the Duke of Albuquerque remonstrated with him upon entering with such incautious haste into the enemies' country. He represented to him, that there were troops enough assembled to succour Alhama, and that it was not for him to adventure his royal person in doing what could

* Illescas, Hist. Pontifical.

be done by his subjects, especially as he had such valiant and experienced captains to act for him. "Besides, sire," added the duke, "your majesty should bethink you, that the troops about to take the field are mere men of Andalusia; whereas your illustrious predecessors never made an inroad into the territory of the Moors, without being accompanied by a powerful force of the stanch and iron warriors of Old Castile."

"Duke," replied the king, "your council might have been good had I not departed from Medina with the avowed determination of succouring these cavaliers in person. I am now near the end of my journey, and it would be beneath my dignity to change my intention, before even I had met with an impediment. I shall take the troops of this country who are assembled, without waiting for those of Castile, and, with the aid of God, shall prosecute my journey*."

As King Ferdinand approached Cordova, the principal inhabitants came forth to receive him. Learning, however, that the Duke of

* Pulgar, Cronica, p. iii. c. 3.

Medina Sidonia was already on the march, and pressing forward into the territory of the Moors, the king was all on fire to overtake him, and to lead in person the succour to Alhama. Without entering Cordova, therefore, he exchanged his weary horses for those of the inhabitants who had come forth to meet him, and pressed forward for the army. He despatched fleet couriers in advance, requesting the Duke of Medina Sidonia to await his coming, that he might take command of the forces.

Neither the duke nor his companions in arms, however, felt inclined to pause in their generous expedition, and gratify the inclination of the king. They sent back missives, representing that they were far within the enemies' frontiers, and it was dangerous either to pause or to turn back. They had likewise received pressing entreaties from the besieged to hasten their speed, setting forth their great sufferings, and their hourly peril of being overwhelmed by the enemy.

The king was at Ponton del Maestre when he received these missives. So inflamed was he with zeal for the success of this enterprise,

that he would have penetrated into the kingdom of Granada with the handful of cavaliers who accompanied him; but they represented the rashness of such a journey, through the mountainous defiles of a hostile country thickly beset with towns and castles. With some difficulty, therefore, he was dissuaded from his inclination, and prevailed upon to await tidings from the army, in the frontier city of Anteuera.

CHAPTER VIII.

Sequel of the events at Alhama.

While all Andalusia was thus in arms, and pouring its chivalry through the mountain passes of the Moorish frontier, the garrison of Alhama was reduced to great extremity, and in danger of sinking under its sufferings before the promised succour could arrive. The intolerable thirst that prevailed in consequence of the scarcity of water, the incessant watch that had to be maintained over the vast force of enemies without, and the great number of prisoners within, and the wounds which almost every soldier had received in the incessant skirmishes and assaults, had worn grievously both flesh and spirit. The noble Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, still animated the soldiery, however, by word and example, sharing every hardship, and being foremost in every danger; exemplifying, that a good commander is the vital spirit of an army.

When Muley Aben Hassan heard of the vast force that was approaching under the command of the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and that Ferdinand was coming in person with additional troops, he perceived that no time was to be lost: Alhama must be carried by one powerful attack, or abandoned entirely to the Christians.

A number of Moorish cavaliers, some of the bravest youth of Granada, knowing the wishes of the king, proposed to undertake a desperate enterprise, which, if successful, must put Alhama in his power. Early one morning, when it was scarcely the gray of the dawn, about the time of changing the watch, these cavaliers approached the town, at a place considered inaccessible, from the steepness of the rocks on which the wall was founded; which it was supposed elevated the battlements beyond the reach of the longest scaling ladders. The Moorish knights, aided by a number of the strongest and most active escaladors, mounted these rocks, and applied the ladders without being discovered; for, to divert attention from them, Muley Aben Hassan made a false attack upon the town in another quarter.

The scaling party mounted with difficulty, and in small numbers; the sentinel was killed at his post, and seventy of the Moors made their way into the streets before an alarm was given. The guards rushed to the walls, to stop the hostile throng that was still pouring in. A sharp conflict, hand to hand, and man to man, took place on the battlements, and many on both sides fell. The Moors, whether wounded or slain, were thrown headlong without the walls, the scaling ladders were overturned, and those who were mounting were dashed upon the rocks, and from thence tumbled upon the plain. Thus in a little while the ramparts were cleared by Christian prowess, led on by that valiant knight Don Alonzo Ponce the uncle, and that brave esquire Pedro Pinedo, nephew of the Marquis of Cadiz.

The walls being cleared, these two kindred cavaliers now hastened with their forces in pursuit of the seventy Moors, who had gained an entrance into the town. The main part of the garrison being engaged at a distance, resisting the feigned attack of the Moorish king, this fierce band of infidels had ranged the streets almost without opposition, and were

making their way to the gates, to throw them open to the army*. They were chosen men from among the Moorish forces, several of them gallant knights of the proudest families of Granada. Their footsteps through the city were in a manner printed in blood, and they were tracked by the bodies of those they had killed and wounded. "They had attained the gate; most of the guard had fallen beneath their cimeters: a moment more and Alhama would have been thrown open to the enemy.

Just at this juncture, Don Alonzo Ponce and Pedro de Pineda reached the spot with their forces. The Moors had the enemy in front and rear: they placed themselves back to back, with their banner in the centre. In this way they fought with desperate and deadly determination, making a rampart around them with the slain. More Christian troops arrived, and hemmed them in, but still they fought, without asking for quarter. As their numbers decreased, they serried their circle still closer, defending their banner from assault, and the last Moor died at his post, grasping the standard

* Zurita, lib. xx. cap. 43.

of the Prophet. This standard was displayed from the walls, and the turbaned heads of the Moors were thrown down to the besiegers *.

Muley Aben Hassan tore his beard with rage at the failure of this attempt, and at the death of so many of his chosen cavaliers. He saw, that all further effort was in vain. His scouts brought word, that they had seen from the heights the long columns and flaunting banners of the Christian army approaching through the mountains. To linger would be to place himself between two bodies of the enemy. Breaking up his camp, therefore, in all haste, he gave up the siege of Alhama, and hastened back to Granada, and the last clash of his cymbals scarce died upon the ear from the distant hills, before the standard of the Duke of Medina Sidonia was seen emerging in another direction from the defiles of the mountains.

When the Christians in Alhama beheld their enemies retreating on one side, and their friends advancing on the other, they uttered

* Pedro Pineda received the honour of knighthood from the hand of King Ferdinand for his valour on this occasion. (Alonzo Ponce was already a knight.) See Zuñiga, Annals of Seville, lib. xii. an. 1482.

shouts of joy and hymns of thanksgiving; for it was as a sudden relief from present death. Harassed by several weeks of incessant vigil and fighting, suffering from scarcity of provisions and almost continual thirst, they resembled skeletons rather than living men. It was a noble and gracious sight, to behold the meeting of those two ancient foes, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Marquis of Cadiz. When the marquis beheld his magnanimous deliverer approaching, he melted into tears: all past animosities only gave the greater poignancy to present feelings of gratitude and admiration: they clasped each other in their arms, and, from that time forward, were true and cordial friends.

While this generous scene took place between the commanders, a sordid contest arose among their troops. The soldiers, who had come to the rescue, claimed a portion of the spoils of Alhama; and so violent was the dispute, that both parties seized their arms. The Duke of Medina Sidonia interfered, and settled the question with his characteristic magnanimity. He declared, that the spoil belonged to those who had captured the city. "We

have taken the field," said he, "only for honour, for religion, and for the rescue of our countrymen and fellow-Christians; and the success of our enterprise is a sufficient and glorious reward. If we desire booty, there are sufficient Moorish cities yet to be taken to enrich us all." The soldiers were convinced by the frank and chivalrous reasoning of the duke; they replied to his speech by acclamations, and the transient broil was happily appeased.

The Marchioness of Cadiz, with the forethought of a loving wife, had despatched her major domo with the army, with a large supply of provisions. Tables were immediately spread beneath the tents, where the marquis gave a banquet to the duke and the cavaliers who had accompanied him, and nothing but hilarity prevailed in this late scene of suffering and death.

A garrison of fresh troops was left in Alhama, and the veterans, who had so valiantly captured and maintained it, returned to their homes burdened with precious booty. The marquis and duke, with their confederate cavaliers, repaired to Antiquera, where they were received with great distinction by the king,

who honoured the Marquis of Cadiz with signal marks of favour. The duke then accompanied his late enemy, but now most zealous and grateful friend, the Marquis of Cadiz, to his town of Marchena, where he received the reward of his generous conduct in the thanks and blessings of the marchioness. The marquis gave a sumptuous entertainment in honour of his guest; for a day and night his palace was thrown open, and was the scene of continual revel and festivity. When the duke departed for his estates at St. Lucar, the marquis attended him for some distance on his journey, and when they separated, it was as the parting scene of brothers. Such was the noble spectacle exhibited to the chivalry of Spain by these two illustrious rivals. Each reaped universal renown from the part he had performed in the campaign: the marquis, from having surprised and captured one of the most important and formidable fortresses of the kingdom of Granada, and the duke from having subdued his deadliest foe by a great act of magnanimity.

CHAPTER IX.

Events at Granada, and rise of the Moorish king Boabdil el Chico.

THE Moorish king Aben Hassan returned, baffled and disappointed, from before the walls of Alhama, and was received with groans and smothered execrations by the people of Granada. The prediction of the santon was in every mouth, and appeared to be rapidly fulfilling; for the enemy was already strongly fortified in Alhama, in the very heart of the kingdom. The disaffection, which broke out in murmurs among the common people, fermented more secretly and dangerously among the nobles. Muley Aben Hassan was of a fierce and cruel nature: his reign had been marked with tyranny and bloodshed, and many chiefs of the family of the Abencerrages, the noblest lineage among the Moors, had fallen victims to his policy or vengeance. A deep plot was now formed to put an end to his oppressions,

and dispossess him of the throne. The situation of the royal household favoured the conspiracy.

Muley Aben Hassan, though cruel, was uxorious; that is to say, he had many wives, and was prone to be managed by them by turns. He had two queens, in particular, whom he had chosen from affection. One, named Ayxa, was a Moorish female; she was likewise termed in Arabic La Horra, or "the chaste," from the spotless purity of her character. While yet in the prime of her beauty, she bore a son to Aben Hassan, the expected heir to his throne. The name of this prince was Mahomet Abdalla, or, as he has more generally been termed among historians, Boabdil. At his birth the astrologers, according to custom, cast his horoscope: they were seized with fear and trembling when they beheld the fatal portents revealed to their science. "Alla achbar! God is great!" exclaimed they: "he alone controls the fate of empires: it is written in the heavens, that this prince shall sit upon the throne of Granada, but that the downfall of the kingdom shall be accomplished during his reign." From this time the prince was ever

regarded with aversion by his father; and the series of persecutions which he suffered, and the dark prediction which hung over him from his infancy, procured him the surname of El Zogoybi, or "the unfortunate." He is more commonly known by the appellation of El Chico, "the younger," to distinguish him from an usurping uncle.

The other favourite queen of Aben Hassan was named Fatima, to which the Moors added the appellation of La Zoroya, or "the light of the dawn," from her effulgent beauty. She was a Christian by birth, the daughter of the commander Sancho Ximenes de Solis; and had been taken captive in her tender youth *.

The king, who was well stricken in years at the time, became enamoured of the blooming Christian maid. He made her his sultana; and, like most old men, who marry in their dotage, resigned himself to her management. Zoroya became the mother of two princes; and her anxiety for their advancement seemed to extinguish every other natural feeling in her breast. She was as ambitious as she was

* Cronica del Gran Cardenal, c. lxxi.

beautiful, and her ruling desire became, to see one of her sons seated upon the throne of Granada.

For this purpose she made use of all her arts, and of the complete ascendancy she had over the mind of her cruel husband, to undermine his other children in his affections, and to fill him with jealousies of their designs. Muley Aben Hassan was so wrought upon by her machinations, that he publicly put several of his sons to death at the celebrated fountain of lions, in the court of the Alhambra; a place signalized in Moorish history as the scene of many sanguinary deeds.

The next measure of Zoroya was against her rival sultana, the virtuous Ayxa. She was past the bloom of her beauty, and had ceased to be attractive in the eyes of her husband. He was easily persuaded to repudiate her, and to confine her and her son in the tower of Comares, one of the principal towers of the Alhambra. As Boabdil increased in years, Zoroya beheld in him a formidable obstacle to the pretensions of her sons; for he was universally considered heir apparent to the throne. The jealousies, suspicions, and alarms of his tiger-hearted

father were again excited; he was reminded, too, of the prediction, that fixed the ruin of the kingdom during the reign of this prince. Muley Aben Hassan impiously set the stars at defiance. "The sword of the executioner," said he, "shall prove the falsehood of these lying horoscopes, and shall silence the ambition of Boabdil, as it has the presumption of his brothers."

The sultana Ayxa was secretly apprized of the cruel design of the old monarch. She was a woman of talents and courage, and by means of her female attendants concerted a plan for the escape of her son. A faithful servant was instructed to wait below the Alhambra, in the dead of the night, on the banks of the river Darro, with a fleet Arabian courser. The sultana, when the castle was in a state of deep repose, tied together the shawls and scarfs of herself and her female attendants, and lowered the youthful prince from the tower of Comares *. He made his way in safety down the steep rocky hill to the banks of the Darro, and, throwing himself on the Arabian courser, was thus spi-

* Salazar, Cronica del Gran Cardenal, c. lxxi.

rited off to the city of Guadix in the Alpuxarres. Here he lay for some time concealed, until, gaining adherents, he fortified himself in the place, and set the machinations of his tyrant father at defiance. Such was the state of affairs in the royal household of Granada, when Muley Aben Hassan returned foiled from his expedition against Alhama. The faction, which had been secretly formed among the nobles, determined to depose the old king Aben Hassan, and to elevate his son Boabdil to the throne. They concerted their measures with the latter, and an opportunity soon presented to put them in practice. Muley Aben Hassan had a royal country palace, called Alexares, in the vicinity of Granada, to which he resorted occasionally, to recreate his mind during this time of perplexity. He had been passing one day among its bowers, when, on returning to the capital, he found the gates closed against him, and his son Mohammed Abdalla, otherwise called Boabdil, proclaimed king. "Alla achbar! God is great!" exclaimed old Muley Aben Hassan; "it is in vain to contend against what is written in the book of fate. It was predestined, that my son

should sit upon the throne. Alla forefend the rest of the prediction!" The old monarch knew the inflammable nature of the Moors, and that it was useless to attempt to check any sudden blaze of popular passion. "A little while," said he, "and this rash flame will burn itself out; and the people, when cool, will listen to reason." So he turned his steed from the gate, and repaired to the city of Baza, where he was received with great demonstrations of loyalty. He was not a man to give up his throne without a struggle. A large part of the kingdom still remained faithful to him; he trusted, that the conspiracy in the capital was but transient and partial, and that by suddenly making his appearance in its streets, at the head of a moderate force, he should awe the people again into allegiance. He took his measures with that combination of dexterity and daring which formed his character, and arrived one night under the walls of Granada with five hundred chosen followers. Scaling the walls of the Alhambra, he threw himself, with sanguinary fury, into its silent courts. The sleeping inmates were roused from their repose only to fall by the extermi-

nating cimeter. The rage of Aben Hassan spared neither age, nor rank, nor sex; the halls resounded with shrieks and yells, and the fountains ran red with blood. The alcayde, Aben Çŏmixer, retreated to a strong tower, with a few of the garrison and inhabitants. The furious Aben Hassan did not lose time in pursuing him: he was anxious to secure the city, and to wreak his vengeance on its rebellious inhabitants. Descending with his bloody band into the streets, he cut down the defenceless inhabitants, as, startled from their sleep, they rushed forth, to learn the cause of the alarm. The city was soon completely roused; the people flew to arms; lights blazed in every street, revealing the scanty numbers of this band, that had been dealing such fatal vengeance in the dark. Muley Aben Hassan had been mistaken in his conjectures. The great mass of the people, incensed by his tyranny, were zealous in favour of his son. A violent but transient conflict took place in the streets and squares; many of the followers of Aben Hassan were slain, the rest driven out of the city, and the old monarch, with the remnant of his band, retreated to his loyal city of Malaga.

Such was the commencement of those great internal feuds and divisions, which hastened the downfall of Granada. The Moors became separated into two hostile factions, headed by the father and the son, and several bloody encounters took place between them; yet they never failed to act with all their separate force against the Christians, as a common enemy, whenever an opportunity occurred.

CHAPTER X.

Royal expedition against Loxa.

KING FERDINAND held a council of war at Cordova, where it was deliberated what was to be done with Alhama. Most of the council advised, that it should be demolished, inasmuch as, being in the centre of the Moorish kingdom, it would be at all times liable to attack, and could only be maintained by a powerful garrison, and at vast expense. Queen Isabella arrived at Cordova in the midst of these deliberations, and listened to them with surprise and impatience. "What!" said she, "shall we destroy the first fruits of our victories? shall we abandon the first place we have wrested from the Moors? Never let us suffer such an idea to occupy our minds. It would give new courage to the enemy; arguing fear or feebleness in our councils. You talk of the toil and expense of maintaining Alhama. Did we doubt, on undertaking this war, that it was to

be a war of infinite cost, labour, and bloodshed? and shall we shrink from the cost the moment a victory is obtained, and the question is merely, to guard or abandon its glorious trophy? Let us hear no more about the destruction of Alhama; let us maintain its walls sacred, as a strong hold, granted us by Heaven, in the centre of this hostile land; and let our only consideration be, how to extend our conquest, and capture the surrounding cities." The language of the queen infused a more lofty and chivalrous spirit into the royal council. Preparations were immediately made to maintain Alhama at all risk and expense; and King Ferdinand appointed as alcayde, Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, senior of the house of Palma, supported by Diego Lopez de Ayola, Pero Ruiz de Alarcon, and Alonzo Ortis, captains of four hundred lances and a body of one thousand foot, supplied with provisions for three months. Ferdinand resolved also to lay siege to Loxa, a city of great strength, at no great distance from Alhama. For this purpose he called upon all the cities and towns of Andalusia and Estremadura, and the domains of the orders of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcan-

tara, and of the priory of St. Juan, and the kingdom of Toledo, and beyond, to the cities of Salamanca, Toro, and Valladolid, to furnish, according to their repartimientos or allotments, a certain quantity of bread, wine, and cattle, to be delivered at the royal camp before Loxa, one half at the end of June, and one half in July. These lands, also, together with Biscay and Guipuscoa, were ordered to send reinforcements of horse and foot, each town furnishing its quota; and great diligence was used in providing lombards, powder, and other warlike munitions.

The Moors were no less active in their preparations; and sent missives into Africa, entreating supplies, and calling upon the Barbary princes to aid them in this war of the faith. To intercept all succour, the Castilian sovereigns stationed an armada of ships and galleys in the Straits of Gibraltar, under the command of Martin Diaz de Mena and Carlos de Valera, with orders to scour the Barbary coast, and sweep every Moorish sail from the sea.

While these preparations were making, Ferdinand made an incursion, at the head of his army, into the kingdom of Granada, and laid

waste the vega; destroying its hamlets and villages, ravaging its fields of grain, and driving away the cattle.

It was about the end of June, that King Ferdinand departed from Cordova, to sit down before the walls of Loxa. So confident was he of success, that he left a great part of the army at Ecija, and advanced with but five thousand cavalry and eight thousand infantry. The Marquis of Cadiz, a warrior as wise as he was valiant, remonstrated against employing so small a force; and, indeed, was opposed to the measure altogether, as being undertaken precipitately, and without sufficient preparation. King Ferdinand, however, was influenced by the counsel of Don Diego de Merlo, and was eager to strike a brilliant and decided blow. A vainglorious confidence prevailed about this time among the Spanish cavaliers: they overrated their own prowess; or rather, they undervalued and despised their enemy. Many of them believed, that the Moors would scarcely remain in their city, when they saw the Christian troops advancing to assail it. The Spanish chivalry marched, therefore, gallantly and fearlessly, and almost carelessly,

over the border, scantily supplied with the things needful for a besieging army in the heart of an enemy's country. In the same negligent and confident spirit they took up their station before Loxa. The country around was broken and hilly, so that it was extremely difficult to form a combined camp. The river Xenil, which runs by the town, was compressed between high banks, and so deep as to be fordable with extreme difficulty, and the Moors had possession of the bridge. The king pitched his tents in a plantation of olives, on the banks of the river; the troops were distributed in different encampments on the heights, but separated from each other by deep rocky ravines, so as to be incapable of yielding each other prompt assistance, and there was no room for the operation of the cavalry. The artillery, also, was so injudiciously placed as to be almost entirely useless. Alonzo of Arragon, Duke of Villahermosa, and illegitimate brother of the king, was present at the siege, and disapproved of the whole arrangement. He was one of the most able generals of his time, and especially renowned for his skill in battering fortified places. He recommended,

that the whole disposition of the camp should be changed, and that several bridges should be thrown across the river. His advice was adopted, but slowly and negligently followed; so that it was rendered of no avail. Among other oversights, in this hasty and negligent expedition, the army had no supply of baked bread, and, in the hurry of encampment, there was no time to erect furnaces. Cakes were therefore hastily made, and baked on the coals; and for two days the troops were supplied in this irregular way.

King Ferdinand felt too late the insecurity of his position, and endeavoured to provide a temporary remedy. There was a height near the city, called by the Moors Santo Albohacen, which was in front of the bridge. He ordered several of his most valiant cavaliers to take possession of this height, and to hold it, as a check upon the enemy and a protection to the camp. The cavaliers chosen for this distinguished and perilous post were the Marquis of Cadiz, the Marquis of Villena, Don Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava, his brother the Count of Ureña, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. These valiant warriors, and tried

companions in arms, led their troops with alacrity to the height, which soon glittered with the array of arms, and was graced by several of the most redoubtable pennons of warlike Spain.

Loxa was commanded at this time by an old Moorish alcayde, whose daughter was the favourite wife of Boabdil el Chico. The name of this Moor was Ibraham Ali Atar; but he was generally known among the Spaniards as Alatar. He had grown gray in border warfare, was an implacable enemy of the Christians, and his name had long been the terror of the frontier. He was in the ninetieth year of his age, yet indomitable in spirit, fiery in his passions, sinewy and powerful in frame, deeply versed in warlike stratagem, and accounted the best lance in all Mauritania. He had three thousand horsemen under his command, veteran troops, with whom he had often scoured the borders, and he daily expected the old Moorish king with reinforcements.

Old Ali Atar had watched, from his fortress, every movement of the Christian army, and had exulted in all the errors of its commanders. When he beheld the flower of Spanish chivalry

glittering about the height of Albohacen, his eye flushed with exultation. "By the aid of Allah," said he, "I will give these prankling cavaliers a rouse."

Ali Atar privately, and by night, sent forth a large body of his chosen troops, to lie in ambush near one of the skirts of Albohacen. On the fourth day of the siege, he sallied across the bridge, and made a feigned attack upon the height. The cavaliers rushed impetuously forth to meet him, leaving their encampments almost unprotected. Ali Atar wheeled and fled, and was hastily pursued. When the Christian cavaliers had been drawn a considerable distance from their encampments, they heard a vast shout behind them, and, looking round, beheld their encampment assailed by the Moorish force, which had been placed in ambush, and had ascended a different side of the hill.

The cavaliers desisted from the pursuit, and hastened to prevent the plunder of their tents. Ali Atar in his turn wheeled and pursued them; and they were attacked in front and rear on the summit of the hill. The contest lasted for an hour; the height of Albohacen

was red with blood; many brave cavaliers fell, expiring among heaps of the enemy. The fierce Ali Atar fought with the fury of a demon, until the arrival of more Christian forces compelled him to retreat into the city. The severest loss to the Christians in this skirmish was that of Roderigo Tellez Giron, master of Calatrava: as he was raising his arm to make a blow, an arrow pierced him, just beneath the shoulder, at the open part of the corslet. He fell instantly from his horse, but was caught by Pedro Gasca, a cavalier of Avila, who conveyed him to his tent, where he died. The king and queen and the whole kingdom mourned his death; for he was in the freshness of his youth, being but twenty-four years of age, and had proved himself a gallant and high-minded cavalier. A melancholy group collected about his corse, on the bloody height of Albohacen: the knights of Calatrava mourned him as a commander; the cavaliers, who were encamped on the height, lamented him as their companion in arms in a service of perils, while the Count of Ureña grieved over him with the tender affection of a brother.

King Ferdinand now perceived the wisdom

of the opinion of the Marquis of Cadiz, and that his force was quite insufficient for the enterprise. To continue his camp in its present unfortunate position would cost him the lives of his bravest cavaliers, if not a total defeat, in case of reinforcements to the enemy. He called a council of war late in the evening of Saturday; and it was determined to withdraw the army, early the next morning, to Rio Frio, a short distance from the city, and there wait for additional troops from Cordova. The next morning early, the cavaliers on the height of Albohacen began to strike their tents. No sooner did Ali Atar behold this, than he sallied forth to attack them. Many of the Christian troops, who had not heard of the intention to change the camp, seeing the tents struck, and the Moors sallying forth, supposed that the enemy had been reinforced in the night, and that the army was on the point of retreating. Without stopping to ascertain the truth, or to receive orders, they fled in dismay, spreading confusion through the camp; nor did they halt until they had reached the Rock of the Lovers, about seven leagues from Loxa*.

* Pulgar, Cronica.

The king and his commanders saw the imminent peril of the moment, and made face to the Moors, each commander guarding his quarter, and repelling all assaults, while the tents were struck, and the artillery and ammunition conveyed away. The king, with a handful of cavaliers, galloped to a rising ground, exposed to the fire of the enemy, calling upon the flying troops, and endeavouring in vain to rally them. Setting upon the Moors, he and his cavaliers charged them so vigorously, that they put a squadron to flight, slaying many with their swords and lances, and driving others into the river, where they were drowned. The Moors, however, were soon reinforced, and returned in great numbers. The king was in danger of being surrounded: the Moors assailed him furiously; and twice he owed his safety to the valour of Don Juan de Ribera, senior of Montemayor.

The Marquis of Cadiz beheld from a distance the peril of his sovereign. Summoning about seventy horsemen to follow him, he galloped to the spot, threw himself between the king and the enemy, and, hurling his lance, transpierced one of the most daring of the

Moors. For some time he remained with no other weapon than his sword; his horse was wounded by an arrow, and many of his followers were slain; but he succeeded in beating off the Moors, and rescuing the king from imminent jeopardy, whom he then prevailed upon to retire to less dangerous ground.

The marquis continued throughout the day to expose himself to the repeated assaults of the enemy. He was ever found in the place of greatest danger, and through his bravery a great part of the army and the camp was preserved from destruction*. It was a perilous day for the commanders; for, in a retreat of the kind, it is the noblest cavaliers who most expose themselves, to save their people. The Duke of Medina Celi was struck to the ground, but rescued by his troops. The Count of Tendilla, whose tents were nearest to the city, received several wounds; and various other cavaliers of the most distinguished note were exposed to fearful hazard. The whole day was passed in bloody skirmishings, in which the hidalgos and cavaliers of the royal household distinguished themselves by their bravery.

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 58.

At length, the encampments being all broken up, and most of the artillery and baggage removed, the bloody height of Albohacen was abandoned, and the neighbourhood of Loxa evacuated. Several tents, a quantity of provisions, and a few pieces of artillery, were left upon the spot, from the want of horses or mules to carry them off.

Ali Atar hung upon the rear of the retiring army, and harassed it until it reached Rio Frio. From thence Ferdinand returned to Cordova, deeply mortified, though greatly benefited, by the severe lesson he had received, which served to render him more cautious in his campaigns, and more diffident of fortune. He sent letters to all parts excusing his retreat, imputing it to the small number of his forces, and the circumstance, that many of them were quotas sent from various cities, and not in royal pay. In the mean time, to console his troops for their disappointment, and to keep up their spirits, he led them upon another inroad, to lay waste the vega of Granada.

CHAPTER XI.

How Muley Aben Hassan made a foray into the lands of Medina Sidonia, and how he was received.

Old Muley Aben Hassan had mustered an army, and marched to the relief of Loxa; but arrived too late. The last squadron of Ferdinand had already passed over the border. "They have come and gone," said he, "like a summer cloud, and all their vaunting has been mere empty thunder." He turned, to make another attempt upon Alhama, the garrison of which was in the utmost consternation at the retreat of Ferdinand, and would have deserted the place, had it not been for the courage and perseverance of the alcayde, Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero. That brave and loyal commander cheered up the spirits of the men, and kept the old Moorish king at bay, until the approach of Ferdinand, on his second incursion into the vega, obliged him to make an unwilling retreat to Malaga.

Muley Aben Hassan felt, that it would be in vain, with his inferior force, to oppose the powerful army of the Christian monarch; but to remain idle, and see his territories laid waste, would ruin him in the estimation of his people. "If we cannot parry," said he, "we can strike: if we cannot keep our own lands from being ravaged, we can ravage the lands of the enemy." He inquired, and learned that most of the chivalry of Andalusia, in their eagerness for a foray, had marched off with the king, and left their own country almost defenceless. The territories of the Duke of Medina Sidonia were particularly unguarded. Here were vast plains of pasturage, covered with flocks and herds; the very country for a hasty inroad. The old monarch had a bitter grudge against the duke, for having foiled him at Alhama. "I'll give this cavalier a lesson," said he, exultingly, "that will cure him of his love of campaigning." So he prepared in all haste for a forage into the country about Medina Sidonia.

Muley Aben Hassan sallied out of Malaga with fifteen hundred horse and six thousand foot, and took the way by the seacoast, march-

ing through Esteponia and entering the Christian country between Gibraltar and Castellar. The only person that was likely to molest him on this route was one Pedro de Vargas, a shrewd, hardy, and vigilant soldier, alcayde of Gibraltar, and who lay ensconced in his old warrior-rock as in a citadel. Muley Aben Hassan knew the watchful and daring character of the man; but had ascertained, that his garrison was too small to enable him to make a sally, or at least to assure him any success. Still he pursued his march with great silence and caution; sent parties in advance, to explore every pass where a foe might lie in ambush, cast many an anxious eye towards the old rock of Gibraltar, as its cloudcapt summit was seen towering in the distance on his left; nor did he feel entirely at ease, until he had passed through the broken and mountainous country of Castellar, and descended into the plains. Here he encamped, on the banks of the Celemin. From hence he sent four hundred corredors, or fleet horsemen, armed with lances, who were to station themselves near Algeziras, and to keep a strict watch, across the bay, upon the opposite fortress of Gibraltar. If the al-

cayde attempted to sally forth, they were to waylay and attack him, being almost four times his supposed force, and were to send swift tidings to the camp.

In the mean time, two hundred corredors were despatched to scour that vast plain called the Campiña de Tarifa, abounding with flocks and herds, and two hundred more were to ravage the lands about Medina Sidonia. Muley Aben Hassan remained with the main body of the army as a rallying point on the banks of the Celemin. The foraging parties scoured the country to such effect, that they came driving vast flocks and herds before them, enough to supply the place of all that had been swept from the vega of Granada. The troops which had kept watch upon the rock of Gibraltar returned, with word, that they had not seen a Christian helmet stirring. The old king congratulated himself upon the secrecy and promptness with which he had conducted his foray, and upon having baffled the vigilance of Pedro de Vargas.

Muley Aben Hassan had not been so secret as he imagined. The watchful Pedro de Vargas had received notice of his movements. His

garrison was barely sufficient for the defence of the place, and he feared to take the field, and leave his fortress unguarded. Luckily, at this juncture, there arrived in the harbour of Gibraltar a squadron of the armed galleys stationed in the strait, and commanded by Carlos de Valera. The alcayde immediately prevailed upon him to guard the place during his absence, and sallied forth at midnight with seventy horse. He made for the town of Castellar, which is strongly posted on a steep height, knowing that the Moorish king would have to return by this place. He ordered alarm fires to be lighted upon the mountains, to give notice that the Moors were on the ravage, that the peasants might drive the flocks and herds to places of refuge; and he sent couriers, riding at full speed in every direction, summoning the fighting men of the neighbourhood to meet him at Castellar. Muley Aben Hassan saw, by the fires blazing about the mountains, that the country was rising.

He struck his tents, and pushed forward as rapidly as possible for the border; but he was encumbered with booty, and with the vast cavalgada swept from the pastures of the

Campiña of Tarifa. His scouts brought him word, that there were troops in the field; but he made light of the intelligence, knowing, that they could only be those of the alcayde of Gibraltar, and that he had not more than a hundred horsemen in his garrison. He threw in advance two hundred and fifty of his bravest troops, and with them the alcaydes of Marabilla and Casares. Behind this vanguard was a great cavalgada of cattle, and in the rear marched the king, with the main force of his little army. It was near the middle of a sultry summer day, that they approached Castellar. De Vargas was on the watch; and beheld, by an immense cloud of dust, that they were descending one of the heights of that wild and broken country. The vanguard and rearguard were above half a league asunder, with the cavalgada between them, and a long and close forest hid them from each other. De Vargas saw, that they could render but little assistance to each other, in case of a sudden attack, and might be easily thrown into confusion. He chose fifty of his bravest horsemen, and, making a circuit, took his post secretly in a narrow glen, opening into a defile between two rocky

heights, through which the Moors had to pass. It was his intention to suffer the vanguard and the cavalgada to pass, and to fall upon the rear.

While thus lying perdue, six Moorish scouts, well mounted and well armed, entered the glen, examining every place that might conceal an enemy. Some of the Christians advised, that they should slay these six men, and retreat to Gibraltar. "No," said De Vargas; "I have come out for higher game than these, and I hope, by the aid of God and Santiago, to do good work this day. I know these Moors well, and doubt not but that they may readily be thrown into confusion."

By this time the six scouts approached so near, that they were on the point of discovering the Christian ambush. De Vargas gave the word, and ten horsemen rushed forth upon them. In an instant, four of the Moors rolled in the dust; the other two put spurs to their steeds, and fled towards their army, pursued by the ten Christians. About eighty of the Moorish vanguard came galloping to the relief of their companions: the Christians turned, and fled towards their ambush. De

Vargas kept his men concealed, until the fugitives and their pursuers came clattering pell-mell into the glen: at a signal trumpet, his men sallied forth, with great heat, and in close array. The Moors almost rushed upon their weapons before they perceived them. Forty of the infidels were overthrown; the rest turned their backs. "Forward!" cried De Vargas: "let us give the vanguard a brush before it can be joined by the rear." So saying, he pursued the flying Moors down the hill, and came with such force and fury upon the advance guard, as to overthrow many of them at the first encounter. As he wheeled off with his men, the Moors discharged their lances, upon which he returned to the charge, and made great slaughter. The Moors fought valiantly for a short time, until the alcaydes of Marabilla and Casares were slain, when they gave way, and fled for the rearguard. In their flight they passed through the cavalgada of cattle, threw the whole in confusion, and raised such a cloud of dust, that the Christians could no longer distinguish objects. Fearing the king and the main body might be at hand, and finding that De Vargas was severely

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wounded, they contented themselves with despoiling the slain, and taking above twenty-eight horses, and then returned to Castellar.

When the routed Moors came flying back on the rearguard, Muley Aben Hassan feared that the people of Xeres were in arms. Several of his followers advised him to abandon the cavalgada, and retreat by another road. "No," said the old king; "he is no true soldier, who gives up his booty without fighting." Putting spurs to his horse, he galloped forward through the centre of the cavalgada, driving the cattle to the right and left. When he reached the field of battle, he found it strewed with the bodies of upwards of one hundred Moors, among which were those of the two alcaydes. Enraged at the sight, he summoned all his crossbow men and cavalry, pushed on to the very gates of Castellar, and set fire to two houses close to the walls. Pedro de Vargas was unable from his wound to sally forth in person; but he ordered out his troops, and there was brisk skirmishing under the walls, until the king drew off, and returned to the scene of the recent encounter. Here he had the bodies of the principal warriors laid across

mules, to be interred honourably at Malaga. The rest of the slain were buried in the field of battle. Gathering together the scattered cavalgada, he paraded it slowly, in an immense line, past the walls of Castellar, by way of taunting his foe.

With all his fierceness, old Muley Aben Hassan had a gleam of warlike courtesy, and admired the hardy and soldierlike character of Pedro de Vargas. He summoned two Christian captives, and demanded, what were the revenues of the alcayde of Gibraltar. They told him, that, among other things, he was entitled to one out of every drove of cattle that passed his boundaries. "Alla forbid!" cried the old monarch, "that so brave a cavalier should be defrauded of his right. He immediately chose twelve of the finest cattle from the twelve droves which formed the cavalgada. These he gave in charge to an alfaqui, to deliver them to Pedro de Vargas. "Tell him," said he, "that I crave his pardon, for not having sent these cattle sooner; but I have this moment learned the nature of his rights, and I hasten to satisfy them with the

punctuality due to so worthy a cavalier. Tell him at the same time, that I had no idea the alcayde of Gibraltar was so active and vigilant in collecting his tolls."

The brave alcayde relished the stern soldier-like pleasantry of the old Moorish monarch, and replied in the same tone. "Tell his majesty," said he, "that I kiss his hands for the honour he has done me, and regret that my scanty force has not permitted me to give him a more signal reception on his coming into these parts. Had three hundred horsemen, whom I have been promised from Xeres, arrived in time, I might have served up an entertainment more befitting such a monarch. I trust, however, they will arrive in the course of the night, in which case his majesty may be sure of a royal regale at the dawning."

He then ordered, that a rich silken vest and scarlet mantle should be given to the alfaqui, and dismissed him with great courtesy.

Muley Aben Hassan shook his head when he received the reply of De Vargas. "Alla preserve us," said he, "from any visitation of these hard riders of Xeres! A handful of

troops, acquainted with the wild passes of these mountains, may destroy an army encumbered as ours is with booty."

It was some relief to the king, however, to learn, that the hardy alcayde of Gibraltar was too severely wounded to take the field in person. He immediately beat a retreat with all speed; hurrying with such precipitation, that the cavalgada was frequently broken and scattered among the rugged defiles of the mountains, and above five thousand of the cattle turned back, and were regained by the Christians. Muley Aben Hassan proceeded triumphantly with the residue to Malaga, glorying in the spoils of the Duke of Medina Sidonia.

King Ferdinand was mortified at finding his incursion into the vega of Granada counterbalanced by this incursion into his own dominions, and saw, that there were two sides to the game of war, as to all other games. The only one who reaped real glory in this series of inroads and skirmishings was Pedro de Vargas, the stout alcayde of Gibraltar*.

* Alonzo de Palencia, l. xxviii. c. 3.

CHAPTER XII.

Foray of the Spanish cavaliers among the mountains of Malaga.

THE foray of old Muley Aben Hassan had touched the pride of the Andalusian chivalry, and they determined on retaliation. For this purpose, a number of the most distinguished cavaliers assembled at Antequera, in the month of March, 1483. The leaders of the enterprise were the gallant Marquis of Cadiz, Don Pedro Henriquez, adelantado of Andalusia, Don Juan de Silva, Count of Cifuentes, and bearer of the royal standard, who commanded in Seville, Don Alonzo de Cardenas, master of the religious and military order of Santiago, and Don Alonzo de Aguilar. Several other cavaliers of note hastened to take part in the enterprise, and in a little time, about twenty-seven hundred horse and several companies of foot were assembled within the old warlike city of Antequera, comprising the very flower of Andalu-

sian chivalry. A council of war was held by the chiefs, to determine in what quarter they should strike a blow. The rival Moorish kings were waging civil war with each other in the vicinity of Granada, and the whole country lay open to inroad. Various plans were proposed by the different cavaliers. The Marquis of Cadiz was desirous of scaling the walls of Zahara, and regaining possession of that important fortress. The master of Santiago, however, suggested a wider range, and a still more important object. He had received information from his adalides, who were apostate Moors, that an incursion might be made with safety into a mountainous region near Malaga, called the Axarquia. Here were valleys of pasture land, well stocked with flocks and herds; and there were numerous villages and hamlets, which would be an easy prey. The city of Malaga was too weakly garrisoned, and had too few cavalry, to send forth any force in opposition. And he added, that they might extend their ravages to its very gates, and peradventure carry that wealthy place by sudden assault. The adventurous spirits of the cavaliers were inflamed by this suggestion: in their

sanguine confidence, they already beheld Malaga in their power, and they were eager for the enterprise. The Marquis of Cadiz endeavoured to interpose a little cool caution: he likewise had apostate adalides, the most intelligent and experienced on the borders. Among these, he placed especial reliance on one, named Luis Amar, who knew all the mountains and valleys of the country. He had received from him a particular account of these mountains of the Axarquia*. Their savage and broken nature was a sufficient defence for the fierce people that inhabited them, who, manning their rocks, and their tremendous passes, which were often nothing more than the deep, dry bed of torrents, might set whole armies at defiance. Even if vanquished, they afforded no spoil to the victor; their houses were little better than bare walls, and they would drive off their scanty flocks and herds to the fortresses of the mountains. The sober council of the marquis

* Pulgar, in his chronicle, reverses the case, and makes the Marquis of Cadiz recommend the expedition to the Axarquia; but Fray Antonio Agapida is supported in his statement by that most veracious and contemporary chronicler, Andres Bernaldo, curate of Los Palacios.

was overruled. The cavaliers, accustomed to mountain warfare, considered themselves and their horses equal to any wild and rugged expedition, and were flushed with the idea of a brilliant assault upon Malaga. Leaving all heavy baggage at Antequera, and all such as had horses too weak for this mountain scramble, they set forth, full of spirit and confidence. Don Alonzo de Aguilar and the adelantado of Andalusia led the squadron of advance; the Count of Cifuentes followed, with certain of the chivalry of Seville; then came the battalion of the most valiant Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz: he was accompanied by several of his brothers and nephews, and many cavaliers who sought distinction under his banner; and as this family band paraded in martial state through the streets of Antequera, they attracted universal attention and applause. The rearguard was led by Don Alonzo Cardenas, master of Santiago; and was composed of the knights of his order, and the cavaliers of Ecija, with certain men at arms of the holy brotherhood, whom the king had placed under his command. The army was attended by a great train of mules, laden with provisions

for a few days' supply, until they should be able to forage among the Moorish villages. Never did a more gallant and self-confident little army tread the earth. It was composed of men full of health and vigour, to whom war was a pastime and delight. They had spared no expense in their equipments; for never was the pomp of war carried to a higher pitch than among the proud chivalry of Spain. Cased in armour, richly inlaid and embossed, decked with rich surcoats and waving plumes, and superbly mounted on Andalusian steeds, they pranced out of Antequera, with banners flying, and their various devices and armorial bearings ostentatiously displayed; and, in the confidence of their hopes, promised the inhabitants to enrich them with the spoils of Malaga. In the rear of this warlike pageant followed a peaceful band, intent upon profiting by the anticipated victories. They were not the customary wretches that hover about armies, to plunder and strip the dead; but goodly and substantial traders, from Seville, Cordova, and other cities of traffic. They rode sleek mules, and were clad in fair raiment, with long leathern purses at their girdles, well filled with pistoles

and other golden coin. They had heard of the spoils, wasted by the soldiery at the capture of Alhama, and were provided with monies to buy up the jewels and precious stones, the vessels of gold and silver, and the rich silks and cloths, that should form the plunder of Malaga. The proud cavaliers eyed these sons of traffic with great disdain, but permitted them to follow, for the convenience of the troops, who might otherwise be overburdened with booty.

It had been intended to conduct this expedition with great celerity and secrecy; but the noise of their preparations had already reached the city of Malaga. The garrison, it is true, was weak, but the commander was himself a host. This was Muley Abdallah, commonly called El Zagal, or, "the valiant." He was younger brother of Muley Aben Hassan, and general of the few forces which remained faithful to the old monarch. He possessed equal fierceness of spirit with his brother, and surpassed him in craft and vigilance. His very name was a war cry among his soldiery, who had the most extravagant opinion of his prowess.

El Zagal suspected, that Malaga was the ob-

ject of this noisy expedition. He consulted with old Bexir, a veteran Moor, who governed the city. "If this army of marauders were to reach Malaga," said he, "we should hardly be able to keep them without its walls. I will throw myself, with a small force, into the mountains, rouse the peasantry, take possession of the passes, and endeavour to give these Spanish cavaliers sufficient entertainment upon the road."

It was on a Wednesday, that the prankling army of highmettled warriors issued from the ancient gates of Antequera. They marched all day and night, making their way secretly, as they supposed, through the passes of the mountains. As the tract of country they intended to maraud was far in the Moorish territories, near the coast of the Mediterranean, they did not arrive there until late in the following day. In passing through these stern and lofty mountains, their path was often along the bottom of a barranco, or deep rocky valley, with a scanty stream dashing along it, among the loose rocks and stones which it had broken and rolled down in the time of its autumnal violence. Sometimes their road was

a mere rambla, or dry bed of a torrent, cut deep into the mountains, and filled with their shattered fragments. These barrancas and ramblas were overhung by immense cliffs and precipices, forming the lurking places of ambuscades during the wars between the Moors and Spaniards, as in after times they have become the favourite haunts of robbers, to waylay the unfortunate traveller.

As the sun went down, the cavaliers came to a lofty part of the mountains, commanding, to their right, a distant glimpse of a part of the fair vega of Malaga, with the blue Mediterranean beyond, and they hailed it with exultation as a glimpse of the promised land. As the night closed in, they reached the chain of little valleys and hamlets, locked up among these rocky heights, and known among the Moors by the name of the Axarquia. Here their vaunting hopes were destined to meet with the first disappointment. The inhabitants had heard of their approach; they had conveyed away their cattle and effects; and, with their wives and children, had taken refuge in the towers and fortresses of the mountains. Enraged at their disappointment, the

troops set fire to the deserted houses, and pressed forward, hoping for better fortune as they advanced. Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the other cavaliers in the vanguard, spread out their forces, to lay waste the country; capturing a few lingering herds of cattle, with the Moorish peasants who were driving them to some place of safety. While this marauding party carried fire and sword in the advance, and lit up the mountain cliffs with the flames of the hamlets, the master of Santiago, who brought up the rearguard, maintained strict order, keeping his knights together in martial array, ready for attack or defence should an enemy appear. The men at arms of the Holy Brotherhood attempted to roam in quest of booty; but he called them back, and rebuked them severely.

At length they came to a part of the mountain completely broken up by barrancas and ramblas of vast depth, and shagged with rocks and precipices. It was impossible to maintain the order of march; the horses had no room for action, and were scarcely manageable, having to scramble from rock to rock, and up and down frightful declivities, where there was scarce footing for a mountain goat. Passing

by a burning village, the light of the flames revealed their perplexed situation. The Moors who had taken refuge in a watchtower on an impending height, shouted with exultation, when they looked down upon these glistering cavaliers, struggling and stumbling among the rocks. Sallying forth from their tower, they took possession of the cliffs which overhung the ravine, and hurled darts and stones upon the enemy. It was with the utmost grief of heart, that the good master of Santiago beheld his brave men falling like helpless victims around him, without the means of resistance or revenge. The confusion of his followers was increased by the shouts of the Moors, multiplied by the echoes of every crag and cliff, as if they were surrounded by innumerable foes. Being entirely ignorant of the country, in their struggles to extricate themselves they plunged into other glens and defiles, where they were still more exposed to danger. In this extremity, the master of Santiago despatched messengers in search of succour. The Marquis of Cadiz, like a loyal companion in arms, hastened to his aid with his cavalry. His approach checked the as-

saults of the enemy; and the master was at length enabled to extricate his troops from the defile. In the mean time, Don Alonzo de Aguilar and his companions, in their eager advance, had likewise got entangled in deep glens, and dry beds of torrents, where they had been severely galled by the insulting attacks of a handful of Moorish peasants, posted on the impending precipices. The proud spirit of De Aguilar was incensed at having the game of war thus turned upon him, and his gallant forces domineered over, by mountain boors, whom he had thought to drive, like their own cattle, to Antequera. Hearing, however, that the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago were engaged with the enemy, he disregarded his own danger, and, calling together his troops, returned to assist them, or rather, to partake of their perils. Being once more assembled together, the cavaliers held a hasty council, amidst the hurling of stones and whistling of arrows; and their resolves were quickened by the sight, from time to time, of some gallant companion in arms laid low. They determined, that there was no spoil in this part of the country to repay

the extraordinary peril; and that it was better to abandon the herds they had already taken, which only embarrassed their march, and to retreat with all speed to less dangerous ground.

The adalides or guides were ordered to lead the way out of this place of carnage. These, thinking to conduct them by the most secure route, led them by a steep and rocky pass, difficult to the foot soldiers, but almost impracticable to the cavalry. It was overhung with precipices, whence showers of stones and arrows were poured upon them, accompanied by savage yells, which appalled the stoutest heart. In some places they could pass but one at a time, and were often transpierced, horse and rider, by the Moorish darts; the progress of their comrades impeded by their dying struggles. The surrounding precipices were lit up by a thousand alarm fires, and every crag and cliff had its flames, by the light of which they beheld their foes bounding from rock to rock, and looking more like fiends than mortal men. Either through terror and confusion, or through real ignorance of the country, their guides, instead of

conducting them out of the mountains, led them deeper into their fatal recesses. The morning dawned upon them in a narrow rambla, its bottom filled with broken rocks, where once had raved along the mountain torrent, while above them beetled huge arid cliffs, over the brows of which they beheld the turbaned heads of their fierce and exulting foes. What a different appearance did the unfortunate cavaliers present, from the gallant band that marched so vauntingly out of Antequera! Covered with dust and blood and wounds, and haggard with fatigue and horror, they looked like victims rather than warriors. Many of their banners were lost, and not a trumpet was heard, to rally their sinking spirits. The men turned with imploring eyes to their commanders, while the hearts of the cavaliers were ready to burst with rage and grief, at the merciless havoc made among their faithful followers.

All day they made ineffectual attempts to extricate themselves from the mountains. Columns of smoke rose from the heights where in the preceding night had blazed the alarm fire. The mountaineers assembled from every di-

rection; they swarmed at every pass, getting in the advance of the Christians, and garrisoning the cliffs like so many towers and battlements.

Night closed again upon the Christians, when they were shut up in a narrow valley, traversed by a deep stream, and surrounded by precipices that seemed to reach the skies, and on which the alarm fires blazed and flared. Suddenly a new cry was heard resounding along the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" echoed from cliff to cliff. "What cry is that?" said the master of Santiago. "It is the war cry of El Zagal, the Moorish general," said an old Castilian soldier: "he must be coming in person with the troops of Malaga."

The worthy master turned to his knights: "Let us die," said he, "making a road with our hearts, since we cannot with our swords. Let us scale the mountain, and sell our lives dearly, instead of staying here to be tamely butchered."

So saying, he turned his steed against the mountain, and spurred him up its flinty side. Horse and foot followed his example; eager, if they could not escape, to have at least a dying

blow at the enemy. As they struggled up the height, a tremendous storm of darts and stones was showered upon them by the Moors. Sometimes a fragment of rock came bounding and thundering down, ploughing its way through the centre of their host. The foot soldiers, faint with weariness and hunger, or crippled by wounds, held by the tails and manes of the horses, to aid them in their ascent, while the horses, losing their footing among the loose stones, or receiving some sudden wound, tumbled down the steep declivity, steed, rider, and soldier rolling from crag to crag, until they were dashed to pieces in the valley. In this desperate struggle, the alferez, or standard-bearer of the master, with his standard, was lost, as were many of his relations and his dearest friends. At length he succeeded in attaining the crest of the mountain, but it was only to be plunged in new difficulties. A wilderness of rocks and rugged dells lay before him, beset by cruel foes. Having neither banner nor trumpet, by which to rally his troops, they wandered apart, each intent upon saving himself from the precipices of the mountains and the darts of the enemy. When the pious master

of Santiago beheld the scattered fragments of his late gallant force, he could not restrain his grief. "O God!" exclaimed he, "great is thine anger this day against thy servants! Thou hast converted the cowardice of these infidels into desperate valour, and hast made peasants and boors victorious over armed men of battle!"

He would fain have kept with his foot soldiers, and, gathering them together, have made head against the enemy; but those around him entreated him to think only of his personal safety. To remain was to perish without striking a blow; to escape was to preserve a life, that might be devoted to vengeance on the Moors. The master reluctantly yielded to their advice. "O Lord of Hosts!" exclaimed he again, "from thy wrath do I fly, not from these infidels: they are but instruments in thy hands to chastise us for our sins!" So saying, he sent the guides in advance, and, putting spurs to his horse, dashed through a defile of the mountains, before the Moors could intercept him. The moment the master put his horse to speed, his troops scattered in all directions. Some endeavoured to follow his traces, but were confounded among the

intricacies of the mountain. They fled hither and thither; many perishing among the precipices, others being slain by the Moors, and others taken prisoners.

The gallant Marquis of Cadiz, guided by his trusty adalid, Luis Amar, had ascended a different part of the mountain. He was followed by his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, the adelantado, and the Count of Cifuentes; but, in the darkness and confusion, the bands of these commanders became separated from each other. When the marquis attained the summit, he looked around for his companions in arms; but they were no longer following him, and there was no trumpet to summon them. It was a consolation to the marquis, however, that his brothers, and several of his relations, with a number of his retainers, were still with him. He called his brothers by name, and their replies gave comfort to his heart.

His guide now led the way into another valley, where he would be less exposed to danger. When he had reached the bottom of it, the marquis paused, to collect his scattered followers, and to give time for his fellow commanders to rejoin him. Here he was suddenly

assailed by the troops of El Zagal, aided by the mountaineers from the cliffs. The Christians, exhausted and terrified, lost all presence of mind; most of them fled, and were either slain or taken captive. The marquis and his valiant brothers, with a few tried friends, made a stout resistance. His horse was killed under him; his brothers, Don Diego and Don Lope, with his two nephews, Don Lorenzo and Don Manuel, were, one by one, swept from his side; either transfixed with darts and lances by the soldiers of El Zagal, or crushed by stones from the heights. The marquis was a veteran warrior, and had been in many a bloody battle, but never before had death fallen so thick and close around him. When he saw his remaining brother, Don Beltran, struck out of his saddle by a fragment of a rock, and his horse running wildly about without his rider, he gave a cry of anguish, and stood bewildered and aghast. A few faithful followers surrounded him, and entreated him to fly for his life. He would still have remained, to have shared the fortunes of his friend, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and his other companions in arms; but the forces of El Zagal were be-

tween him and them, and death was whistling by on every wind. Reluctantly, therefore, he consented to fly. Another horse was brought him: his faithful adalid guided him by one of the steepest paths, which lasted for four leagues; the enemy still hanging on his traces, and thinning the scanty ranks of his followers. At length the marquis reached the extremity of the mountain defiles, and, with a haggard remnant of his men, escaped by dint of hoof to Antequera.

The Count of Cifuentes, with a few of his retainers, in attempting to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, wandered into a narrow pass, where they were completely surrounded by the band of El Zagal. Finding all attempt at escape impossible, and resistance vain, the worthy count surrendered himself prisoner, as did also his brother, Don Pedro de Silva, and the few of his retainers who survived.

The dawn of day found Don Alonzo de Aguilar, with a handful of his adherents, still among the mountains. They had attempted to follow the Marquis of Cadiz, but had been obliged to pause and defend themselves against the thickening forces of the enemy. They at

length traversed the mountain, and reached the same valley where the marquis had made his last disastrous stand. Wearied and perplexed, they sheltered themselves in a natural grotto, under an overhanging rock, which kept off the darts of the enemy; while a bubbling fountain gave them the means of slaking their raging thirst, and refreshing their exhausted steeds. As day broke, the scene of slaughter unfolded its horrors. There lay the noble brothers and nephews of the gallant marquis, transfixed with darts, or gashed and bruised with unseemly wounds; while many other gallant cavaliers were stretched out dead and dying around, some of them partly stripped and plundered by the Moors. De Aguilar was a pious knight, but his piety was not humble and resigned, like that of the worthy master of Santiago. He imprecated holy curses upon the infidels, for having thus laid low the flower of Christian chivalry, and he vowed in his heart bitter vengeance upon the surrounding country. By degrees the little force of De Aguilar was augmented by numbers of fugitives, who issued from caves and chasms,

where they had taken refuge in the night. A little band of mounted knights was gradually formed, and the Moors having abandoned the heights to collect the spoils of the slain, this gallant but forlorn squadron was enabled to retreat to Antequera.

This disastrous affair lasted from Thursday evening throughout Friday, the twenty-first of March, the festival of St. Benedict. It is still recorded in Spanish calendars as the defeat of the mountains of Malaga; and the place where the greatest slaughter took place is pointed out to the present day, and is called *La cuesta de la matanza*, or "the hill of the massacre." The principal leaders who survived returned to Antequera; many of the knights took refuge in Alhama, and others wandered about the mountains for eight days, living on roots and herbs, hiding themselves during the day, and roaming forth at night. So enfeebled and disheartened were they, that they offered no resistance if attacked. Three or four soldiers would surrender to a Moorish peasant, and even the women of Malaga sallied forth and made prisoners. Some were thrown into

the dungeons of frontier towns; others led captive to Granada; but by far the greater number were conducted to Malaga, the city they had threatened to attack. Two hundred and fifty principal cavaliers, alcaydes, commanders, and hidalgos of generous blood, were confined in the alcazaba or citadel of Malaga, to await their ransom; and five hundred and seventy of the common soldiery were crowded in an enclosure or court-yard of the alcazaba, to be sold as slaves*.

Great spoils were collected, of splendid armour and weapons taken from the slain, or thrown away by the cavaliers in their flight; and many horses, magnificently caparisoned, together with numerous standards; all which were paraded in triumph into the Moorish towns.

The merchants, also, who had come with the army, intending to traffic in the spoils of the Moors, were themselves made objects of traffic. Several of them were driven like cattle before the Moorish viragos to the market of Malaga, and, in spite of all their adroitness in

* Cura de los Palacios.

trade, and their attempts to buy themselves off at a cheap ransom, they were unable to purchase their freedom without such draughts upon their money bags at home, as drained them to the very bottom.

CHAPTER XIII.

Effects of the disasters among the mountains of Malaga.

The people of Antequera had scarcely recovered from the tumult of excitement and admiration, caused by the departure of the gallant band of cavaliers upon their foray, when they beheld the scattered wrecks flying for refuge to their walls. Day after day, and hour after hour, brought some wretched fugitive, in whose battered plight, and haggard, wobegone demeanour, it was almost impossible to recognise the warrior, whom they had lately seen to issue so gaily and gloriously from their gates.

The arrival of the Marquis of Cadiz, almost alone, covered with dust and blood, his armour shattered and defaced, his countenance the picture of despair, filled every heart with sorrow; for he was greatly beloved by the people. The multitude asked, where was the band of brothers, that rallied round him as he went forth to the field; and when they heard, that

they had, one by one, been slaughtered at his side, they hushed their voices, or spoke to each other only in whispers as he passed, gazing at him in silent sympathy. No one attempted to console him in so great an affliction, nor did the good marquis speak ever a word, but, shutting himself up, brooded in lonely anguish over his misfortune. It was only the arrival of Don Alonzo de Aguilar that gave him a gleam of consolation; for, amidst the shafts of death that had fallen so thickly among his family, he rejoiced that his chosen friend and brother in arms had escaped uninjured.

For several days every eye was turned, in an agony of suspense, towards the Moorish border, anxiously looking, in every fugitive from the mountains, for the lineaments of some friend or relation, whose fate was yet a mystery. At length all doubt subsided into certainty; the whole extent of this great calamity was known, spreading grief and consternation throughout the land, and laying desolate the pride and hopes of palaces. It was a sorrow, that visited the marble hall and silken pillow. Stately dames mourned over the loss of their sons, the joy and glory of

their age; and many a fair cheek was blanched with wo, that had lately mantled with secret admiration. "All Andalusia," says an historian of the day, "was overwhelmed by a great affliction; there was no drying of the eyes which wept in her *."

Fear and trembling reigned for a while along the frontier. Their spear seemed broken; their buckler cleft in twain. Every border town dreaded an attack, and the mother caught her infant to her bosom, when the watch-dog howled in the night, fancying it the war cry of the Moor. All for a time appeared lost, and despondency even found its way to the royal breasts of Ferdinand and Isabella, amid the splendours of their court.

Great, on the other hand, was the joy of the Moors, when they saw whole legions of Christian warriors brought captive into their towns, by rude mountain peasantry. They thought it the work of Allah in favour of the faithful. But when they recognised, among the captives thus dejected and broken down, several of the proudest of Christian chivalry; when they saw several of the banners and de-

* Cura de los Palacios.

vices of the noblest houses of Spain, which they had been accustomed to behold in the foremost of the battle, now trailed ignominiously through their streets; when, in short, they witnessed the arrival of the Count of Cifuentes, the royal standardbearer of Spain, with his gallant brother, Don Pedro de Silva, brought prisoners into the gates of Granada, there were no bounds to their exultation. They thought, that the days of their ancient glory were about to return, and that they were to renew their career of triumph over the unbelievers.

The Christian historians of the time are sorely perplexed to account for this misfortune; and why so many Christian knights, fighting in the cause of the holy faith, should thus, miraculously as it were, be given captive to a handful of infidel boors; for we are assured, that all this rout and destruction was effected by five hundred foot and fifty horse, and these mere mountaineers, without science or discipline*. "It was intended," observes one historiographer, "as a lesson to their confidence

* Cura de los Palacios.

and vain glory; overrating their own prowess, and thinking, that so chosen a band of chivalry had but to appear in the land of the enemy, and conquer. It was to teach them, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that God alone giveth the victory."

The worthy father Fray Antonio Agapida, however, asserts it to be a punishment for the avarice of the Spanish warriors. They did not enter the kingdom of the infidels with the pure spirit of Christian knights, zealous only for the glory of the faith; but rather as greedy men of trade, to enrich themselves by vending the spoils of the infidels. Instead of preparing themselves by confession and communion, and executing their testaments, and making donations to churches and convents, they thought only of arranging bargains and sales of their anticipated booty. Instead of taking with them holy monks, to aid them with their prayers, they were followed by a train of worldlings, to keep alive their secular and sordid ideas, and to turn what ought to be holy triumphs into scenes of brawling traffic." Such is the opinion of the excellent Agapida, in which he is joined by that most worthy and

upright of chroniclers, the curate of Los Palacios. Agapida comforts himself, however, with the reflection, that this visitation was meant in mercy, to try the Castilian heart, and to extract from its present humiliation the elements of future success, as gold is extracted from amidst the impurities of earth; and in this reflection he is supported by the venerable historian, Pedro Abarca, of the society of Jesuits*.

* Abarca, Anales de Aragon, Rey 30. cap. 2. sect. 7.

CHAPTER XIV.

How King Boabdil el Chico marched over the border.

The defeat of the Christian cavaliers among the mountains of Malaga, and the successful inroad of Muley Aben Hassan into the lands of Medina Sidonia, had produced a favourable effect on the fortunes of the old monarch. The inconstant populace began to shout forth his name in the streets, and to sneer at the inactivity of his son, Boabdil el Chico. The latter, though in the flower of his age, and distinguished for vigour and dexterity in jousts and tournaments, had never yet fleshed his weapon in the field of battle; and it was murmured, that he preferred the silken repose of the cool halls of the Alhambra, to the fatigue and danger of the foray, and the hard encampments of the mountains.

The popularity of these rival kings depended upon their success against the Christians; and Boabdil el Chico found it necessary to strike

some signal blow, to counterbalance the late triumph of his father. He was further incited by the fierce old Moor, his father-in-law, Ali Atar, alcayde of Loxa, with whom the coals of wrath against the Christians still burned among the ashes of age, and had lately been blown into a flame by the attack made by Ferdinand on the city under his command.

Ali Atar informed Boabdil, that the late discomfiture of the Christian knights had stripped Andalusia of the prime of her chivalry, and broken the spirit of the country. All the frontier of Cordova and Ecija now lay open to inroad; but he specially pointed out the city of Lucena as an object of attack; being feebly garrisoned, and lying in a country rich in pasturage, abounding in cattle and grain, in oil and wine. The fiery old Moor spoke from thorough information; for he had made many an incursion into those parts, and his very name was a terror throughout the country. It had become a by-word in the garrison of Loxa, to call Lucena the garden of Ali Atar; for he was accustomed to forage its fertile territories for all his supplies.

Boabdil el Chico listened to the persuasions

of this veteran of the borders. "He assembled a force of nine thousand foot and seven hundred horse, most of them his own adherents, but many the partisans of his father: for both factions, however they might fight among themselves, were ready to unite in any expedition against the Christians. Many of the most illustrious and valiant of the Moorish nobility assembled around his standard, magnificently arrayed, in sumptuous armour and rich embroidery, as though they were going to a festival, or a tilt of reeds, rather than an enterprise of iron war. Boabdil's mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, armed him for the field, and gave him her benediction as she girded his cimeter to his side. His favourite wife Morayma wept, as she thought of the evils that might befall him. "Why dost thou weep, daughter of Ali Atar?" said the high-minded Ayxa; "these tears become not the daughter of a warrior, nor the wife of a king. Believe me, there lurks more danger for a monarch within the strong walls of a palace, than within the frail curtains of a tent. It is by perils in the field, that thy husband must purchase security on his throne."

But Morayma still hung upon his neck with tears and sad forebodings; and when he departed from the Alhambra, she betook herself to her mirador, which looks out over the vega; whence she watched the army, as it passed in shining order along the road that leads to Loxa; and every burst of warlike melody that came swelling on the breeze was answered by a gush of sorrow.

As the royal cavalcade issued from the palace, and descended through the streets of Granada, the populace greeted their youthful sovereign with shouts, and anticipated success that should wither the laurels of his father. In passing through the gate of Elvira, however, the king accidentally broke his lance against the arch. At this, certain of his nobles turned pale, and entreated him not to proceed, for they regarded it as an evil omen. Boabdil scoffed at their fears, for he considered them mere idle fancies; or rather, says Fray Antonio Agapida, he was an incredulous pagan, puffed up with confidence and vain glory. He refused to take another spear, but drew forth his cimeter, and led the way (adds Agapida) in an arrogant and haughty style, as though he would set both

heaven and earth at defiance. // Another evil omen was sent, to deter him from his enterprise. Arriving at the rambla or dry ravine of Beyro, which is scarcely a bowshot from the city, a fox ran through the whole army, and close by the person of the king, and, though a thousand bolts were discharged at it, escaped uninjured to the mountains. The principal courtiers about Boabdil now reiterated their remonstrances against proceeding; for they considered these occurrences as mysterious portents of disasters to their army. The king, however, was not to be dismayed, but continued to march forward *.

At Loxa the royal army was reinforced by old Ali Atar, with the chosen horsemen of his garrison, and many of the bravest warriors of the border towns. The people of Loxa shouted with exultation, when they beheld Ali Atar armed at all points, and once more mounted on his Barbary steed, which had often borne him over the borders. The veteran warrior, with nearly a century of years upon his head, had all the fire and animation of a youth at

* Marmol. Rebel. de los Moros, lib. i. c. 12. fol. 14.

the prospect of a foray, and careered from rank to rank with the velocity of an Arab of the desert. The populace watched the army as it paraded over the bridge, and wound into the passes of the mountains; and still their eyes were fixed upon the pennon of Ali Atar, as if it bore with it an assurance of victory.

The Moorish army entered the Christian frontier by forced marches, hastily ravaging the country, driving off the flocks and herds, and making captives of the inhabitants. They pressed on furiously, and made the latter part of their march in the night, that they might elude observation, and come upon Lucena by surprise. Boabdil was inexperienced in the art of war; but he had a veteran counsellor in his old father-in-law: for Ali Atar knew every secret of the country; and as he prowled through it, his eye ranged over the land, uniting, in its glare, the craft of the fox, with the sanguinary ferocity of the wolf. He had flattered himself, that their march had been so rapid, as to outstrip intelligence, and that Lucena would be an easy capture; when, suddenly, he beheld alarm fires, blazing upon the mountains. "We are discovered," said he to

Boabdil el Chico; "the country will be up in arms. We have nothing left, but to strike boldly for Lucena: it is but slightly garrisoned, and we may carry it by assault, before it can receive assistance." The king approved of his council, and they marched rapidly for the gate of Lucena.

CHAPTER XV.

How the Count de Cabra sallied forth from his castle, in quest of King Boabdil.

Don Diego de Cordova, Count of Cabra, was in the castle of Vaena, which, with the town of the same name, is situated on a lofty sunburnt hill, on the frontier of the kingdom of Cordova, and but a few leagues from Lucena. The range of mountains from Horquera lie between them. The castle of Vaena was strong, and well furnished with arms; and the count had a numerous band of vassals and retainers: for it behoved the noblemen of the frontiers in those times to be well prepared, with man and horse, with lance and buckler, to resist the sudden incursions of the Moors. The Count of Cabra was a hardy and experienced warrior; shrewd in council, prompt in action, rapid and fearless in the field. He was one of the bravest cavaliers for an inroad, and had been quickened and sharpened in thought and action by living on the borders.

On the night of the 20th of April, 1483, the count was about to retire to rest, when the watchman from the turret brought him word, that there were alarm fires on the mountains of Horquera, and that they were made on the signal tower, overhanging the defile, through which the road passes to Cabra and Lucena.

The count ascended the battlements, and beheld five lights blazing on the tower; a sign that there was a Moorish army attacking some place on the frontier. The count instantly ordered the alarmbells to be sounded, and despatched couriers, to rouse the commanders of the neighbouring towns. He ordered all his retainers to prepare for action, and sent a trumpet through the town, summoning the men to assemble at the castle gate at daybreak, armed and equipped for the field.

Throughout the remainder of the night, the castle resounded with the din of preparation. Every house in the town was in equal bustle; for in these frontier towns every house had its warrior, and the lance and buckler were ever hanging against the wall, ready to be snatched down for instant service. Nothing was heard but the noise of armourers, the shoeing of

steeds, and furbishing of weapons; and all night long the alarm fires kept blazing on the mountain.

When the morning dawned, the Count of Cabra sallied forth, at the head of two hundred and fifty cavaliers, of the best families of Vaena; all well appointed, exercised in arms, and experienced in the warfare of the borders. There were, besides, twelve hundred foot soldiers; all brave and well seasoned men of the same town. The count ordered them to hasten forward, whoever could make most speed, taking the road to Cabra, which was three leagues distant. That they might not loiter on the road, he allowed none of them to break their fast, until they arrived at that place. The provident count despatched couriers in advance; and the little army, on reaching Cabra, found tables spread with food and refreshments at the gates of the town. There they were joined by Don Alonzo de Cordova, senior of Zuheros.

Having made a hearty repast, they were on the point of resuming their march, when the count discovered, that, in the hurry of his departure from home, he had forgotten to bring

the standard of Vaena, which, for upwards of eighty years, had always been borne to battle by his family. It was now noon, and there was not time to return. He took, therefore, the standard of Cabra, the device of which is a goat, and which had not been seen in the wars for the last half century. When about to depart, a courier came galloping at full speed, bringing missives to the count, from his nephew, Don Diego Hernandez de Cordova, senior of Lucena, and alcayde de los Donzeles, entreating him to hasten to his aid, as his town was beset by the Moorish king, Boabdil el Chico, with a powerful army, who were actually setting fire to the gates.

The count put his little army instantly in movement for Lucena, which is only one league from Cabra. He was fired with the idea of having the Moorish king in person to contend with. By the time he reached Lucena, the Moors had desisted from the attack, and were ravaging the surrounding country. He entered the town with a few of his cavaliers, and was received with joy by his nephew, whose whole force consisted but of eighty horse and three hundred foot. Don Diego

Hernandez de Cordova was a young man; yet he was a prudent, careful, and capable officer. Having learned, the evening before, that the Moors had passed the frontiers, he had gathered within his walls all the women and children from the environs; had armed the men, sent couriers in all directions for succour, and had lighted alarm-fires on the mountains.

Boabdil had arrived with his army at day-break, and had sent in a message, threatening to put the garrison to the sword, if the place were not instantly surrendered. The messenger was a Moor of Granada, named Hamet, whom Don Diego had formerly known. He contrived to amuse him with negotiation, to gain time for succour to arrive. The fierce old Ali Atar, losing all patience, had made an assault upon the town, and stormed like a fury at the gate; but had been repulsed. Another and more serious attack was expected in the course of the night.

When the Count de Cabra had heard this account of the situation of affairs, he turned to his nephew with his usual alacrity of manner, and proposed, that they should immediately sally forth in quest of the enemy. The

prudent Don Diego remonstrated at the rashness of attacking so great a force with a mere handful of men. "Nephew," said the count, "I came from Vaena with a determination to fight this Moorish king, and I will not be disappointed."

"At any rate," replied Don Diego, "let us wait but two hours, and we shall have reinforcements, which have been promised me from Rambla, Santaella, Montilla, and other places in the neighbourhood." "If we wait these," said the hardy count, "the Moors will be off, and all our trouble will have been in vain. You may await them, if you please: I am resolved on fighting."

The count paused not for a reply; but, in his prompt and rapid manner, sallied forth to his men. The young alcayde de los Donzeles, though more prudent than his ardent uncle, was equally brave. He determined to stand by him in his rash enterprise; and, summoning his little force, marched forth, to join the count, who was already on the alert. They then proceeded together in quest of the enemy.

The Moorish army had ceased ravaging the

country, and were not to be seen, the neighbourhood being hilly, and broken with deep ravines. The count despatched six scouts on horseback, to reconnoitre, ordering them to return with all speed when they should have discovered the enemy, and by no means to engage in skirmishing with stragglers. The scouts, ascending a high hill, beheld the Moorish army in a valley behind it; the cavalry ranged in five battalions, keeping guard, while the foot soldiers were seated on the grass, making a repast. They returned immediately with the intelligence.

The count now ordered the troops to march in the direction of the enemy. He and his nephew ascended the hill, and saw, that the five battalions of Moorish cavalry had been formed into two; one of about nine hundred lances, the other of about six hundred. The whole force seemed prepared to march for the frontier. The foot soldiers were already in motion, with many prisoners, and a great train of mules and beasts of burden, laden with booty. At a distance was Boabdil el Chico. They could not distinguish his person; but they knew him by his superb white charger,

magnificently caparisoned; and by his being surrounded by a numerous guard, sumptuously armed and attired. Old Ali Atar was careering about the valley with his usual impatience, hurrying the march of the loitering troops.

The eyes of the Count de Cabra glistened with eager joy, as he beheld the royal prize within his reach. The immense disparity of their forces never entered into his mind. "By Santiago!" said he to his nephew, as they hastened down the hill, "had we waited for more forces, the Moorish king and his army would have escaped us!"

The count now harangued his men, to inspirit them to this hazardous encounter. He told them, not to be dismayed at the number of the Moors; for God often permitted the few to conquer the many; and he had great confidence, that, through the divine aid, they were that day to achieve a signal victory, which should win them both riches and renown. He commanded, that no man should hurl his lance at the enemy, but should keep it in his hands, and strike as many blows with it as he could. He warned them, also, never to shout, except when the Moors did; for when both armies

shouted together, there was no perceiving which made the most noise, and was the strongest. He desired his uncle, Lope de Mendoza, and Diego Cabrera, alcayde of Menica, to alight, and enter on foot, in the battalion of infantry, to animate them to the combat. He appointed, also, the alcayde of Vaena, and Diego de Clavijo, a cavalier of his household, to remain in the rear, and not to permit any one to lag behind, either to despoil the dead, or for any other purpose.

Such were the orders given by this most adroit, active, and intrepid cavalier to his little army; supplying, by admirable sagacity, and subtle management, the want of a more numerous force. His orders being given, and all arrangements made, he threw aside his lance, drew his sword, and commanded his standard to be advanced against the enemy.

CHAPTER XVI.

The battle of Lucena.

THE Moorish king had descried the Spanish forces at a distance, although a slight fog prevented his seeing them distinctly, and ascertaining their numbers. His old father-in-law, Ali Atar, was by his side, who, being a veteran marauder, was well acquainted with all the standards and armorial bearings of the frontiers. When the king beheld the ancient and long disused banner of Cabra emerging from the mist, he turned to Ali Atar, and demanded whose ensign it was. The old borderer was for once at a loss; for the banner had not been displayed in battle in his time.

"Sire," replied he, after a pause, "I have been considering that standard, but do not know it. It appears to be a dog, which is a device borne by the towns of Baeza and Ubeda. If it be so, all Andalusia is in movement against you; for it is not probable, that any single commander or community would ven-

ture to attack you. I would advise you, therefore, to retire."

The Count of Cabra, in winding down the hill towards the Moors, found himself on a much lower station than the enemy: he therefore ordered in all haste, that his standard should be taken back, so as to gain the vantage ground. The Moors, mistaking this for a retreat, rushed impetuously towards the Christians. The latter, having gained the height proposed, charged down upon them at the same moment, with the battle-cry of "Santiago!" and, dealing the first blows, laid many of the Moorish cavaliers in the dust.

The Moors, thus checked in their tumultuous assault, were thrown into confusion, and began to give way; the Christians following hard upon them. Boabdil el Chico endeavoured to rally them. "Hold! hold! for shame!" cried he: "let us not fly, at least until we know our enemy!" The Moorish chivalry were stung by this reproof, and turned to make front, with the valour of men, who feel, that they are fighting under their monarch's eye.

At this moment, Lorenzo de Porres, alcayde

of Luque, arrived with fifty horse and one hundred foot, sounding an Italian trumpet from among a copse of oak trees, which concealed his force. The quick ear of old Ali Atar caught the note. "That is an Italian trumpet," said he to the king: "the whole world seems in arms against your majesty!"

The trumpet of Lorenzo de Porres was answered by that of the Count de Cabra in another direction; and it seemed to the Moors as if they were between two armies. Don Lorenzo, sallying from among the oaks, now charged upon the enemy. The latter did not wait to ascertain the force of this new foe. The confusion, the variety of alarms, the attacks from opposite quarters, the obscurity of the fog, all conspired to deceive them as to the number of their adversaries. Broken and dismayed, they retreated fighting; and nothing but the presence and remonstrances of the king prevented their retreat from becoming a headlong flight.

This skirmishing retreat lasted for about three leagues. Many were the acts of individual prowess between Christian and Moorish

knights; and the way was strewed by the flower of the king's guards, and of his royal household. At length they came to the rivulet of Mingonzalez, the verdant banks of which were covered with willows and tamarisks. It was swollen by recent rain, and was now a deep and turbid torrent.

Here the king made a courageous stand, with a small body of cavalry, while his baggage crossed the stream. None but the choicest and most loyal of his guards stood by their monarch in this hour of extremity. The foot soldiers took to flight the moment they passed the ford; many of the horsemen, partaking of the general panic, gave reins to their steeds, and scoured for the frontier. The little host of devoted cavaliers now serried their forces in front of their monarch, to protect his retreat. They fought hand to hand with the Christian warriors; disdaining to yield, or to ask for quarter. The ground was covered with the dead and dying. The king, having retreated along the river banks, and gained some distance from the scene of combat, looked back, and saw the loyal band at length give

way. They crossed the ford, followed pell mell by the enemy, and several of them were struck down into the stream.

The king now dismounted from his white charger, whose colour and rich caparison made him too conspicuous, and endeavoured to conceal himself among the thickets which fringed the river. A soldier of Lucena, named Martin Hurtado, discovered him, and attacked him with a pike. The king defended himself with cimeter and target, until another soldier assailed him, and he saw a third approaching. Perceiving that further resistance would be vain, he drew back, and called upon them to desist, offering them a noble ransom. One of the soldiers rushed forward to seize him; but the king struck him to the earth with a blow of his cimeter.

Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova coming up at this moment, the men said to him, "Señor, here is a Moor that we have taken, who seems to be a man of rank, and offers a large ransom."

"Slaves!" exclaimed King Boabdil, "you have not taken me. I surrender to this cavalier."

Don Diego received him with knightly courtesy. He perceived him to be a person of high rank; but the king concealed his quality, and gave himself out as the son of Aben Aleyzer, a nobleman of the royal household*. Don Diego gave him in charge of five soldiers, to conduct him to the castle of Lucena; then putting spurs to his horse, he hastened to rejoin the Count de Cabra, who was in hot pursuit of the enemy. He overtook him at a stream called Riancal, and they continued to press on the skirts of the flying army during the remainder of the day. The pursuit was almost as hazardous as the battle; for had the enemy at any time recovered from their panic, they might, by a sudden reaction, have overwhelmed the small force of their pursuers. To guard against this peril, the wary count kept his battalion always in close order, and had a body of a hundred chosen lances in the advance. The Moors kept up a Parthian retreat. Several times they turned to make battle; but seeing this solid body of steeled warriors pressing upon them, they again took to flight.

* Garibay, lib. xl. cap. 31.

The main retreat of the army was along the valley watered by the Xenil, and opening through the mountains of Algaringo to the city of Loxa. The alarm fires of the preceding night had roused the country. Every man snatched sword and buckler from the wall; and the towns and villages poured forth their warriors, to harass the retreating foe. Ali Atar kept the main force of the army together, and turned fiercely from time to time upon his pursuers. He was like a wolf hunted through the country he had often made desolate by his maraudings.

The alarm of this invasion had reached the city of Antequera, where were several of the cavaliers who had escaped from the carnage in the mountains of Malaga. Their proud minds were festering with their late disgrace, and their only prayer was for vengeance on the infidels. No sooner did they hear of the Moors being over the border, than they were armed and mounted for action. Don Alonzo de Aguilar led them forth: a small body, of but forty horsemen; but all cavaliers of prowess, and thirsting for revenge. They came upon the foe on the banks of the Xenil, where it

winds through the valleys of Cordova. The river, swelled by the late rains, was deep and turbulent, and only fordable at certain places. The main body of the army was gathered in confusion on the banks, endeavouring to ford the stream, protected by the cavalry of Ali Atar.

No sooner did the little band of Alonzo de Aguilar come in sight of the Moors, than fury flashed from their eyes. "Remember the mountains of Malaga!" they cried to each other, as they rushed to combat. Their charge was desperate, but was gallantly resisted. A scrambling and bloody fight ensued, hand to hand, and sword to sword, sometimes on land, sometimes in the water; many were lanced on the banks; others, throwing themselves into the river, sunk with the weight of their armour, and were drowned. Some, grappling together, fell from their horses, but continued their struggle in the waves, and helm and turban rolled together down the stream. The Moors were by far the superior in number, and among them were many warriors of rank; but they were disheartened by defeat, while the Christians were excited even to desperation.

Ali Atar alone preserved all his fire and energy amid his reverses. He had been enraged at the defeat of the army, the loss of the king, and the ignominious flight he had been obliged to make, through a country which had so often been the scene of his exploits: but to be thus impeded in his flight, and harassed and insulted by a mere handful of warriors, roused the violent passions of the old Moor to perfect frenzy.

He had marked Don Alonzo de Aguilar dealing his blows, says Agapida, with the pious vehemence of a righteous knight, who knows that in every wound inflicted upon the infidels, he is doing God service. Ali Atar spurred his steed along the bank of the river, to come upon Don Alonzo by surprise. The back of that warrior was towards him; and, collecting all his force, the Moor hurled his lance, to transfix him on the spot. The lance was not thrown with the usual accuracy of Ali Atar. It tore away a part of the cuirass of Don Alonzo, but failed to inflict a wound. The Moor rushed upon Don Alonzo with his cimeter; but the latter was on the alert, and parried his blow. They fought desperately upon the borders of the

river, alternately pressing each other into the stream, and fighting their way again up the bank. Ali Atar was repeatedly wounded; and Don Alonzo, having pity on his age, would have spared his life. He called upon him to surrender. "Never!" cried Ali Atar, "to a Christian dog!" The words were scarce out of his mouth, when the sword of Don Alonzo clove his turbaned head, and sank deep into the brain. He fell dead without a groan: his body rolled into the Xenil; nor was it ever found and recognised*. Thus fell Ali Atar, who had long been the terror of Andalusia. As he had hated and warred upon the Christians all his life, so he died in the very act of bitter hostility.

The fall of Ali Atar put an end to the transient stand of the cavalry. Horse and foot mingled together in the desperate struggle across the Xenil, and many were trampled down, and perished beneath the waves. Don Alonzo and his band continued to harass them, until they crossed the frontier; and every blow struck home to the Moors seemed to lighten

* Cura de los Palacios.

the load of humiliation and sorrow, which had weighed heavy on their hearts.

In this disastrous rout, the Moors lost upwards of five thousand killed and made prisoners, many of whom were of the most noble lineages of Granada. Numbers fled to rocks and mountains, where they were subsequently taken. This battle was called by some the battle of Lucena; by others, the battle of the Moorish king, because of the capture of Boabdil. Twenty-two banners fell into the hands of the Christians, and were carried to Vaena, and hung up in the church; where, says an historian of after times, they remain to this day. Once a year, on the day of St. George, they are borne about in procession by the inhabitants, who at the same time give thanks to God, for this signal victory granted to their forefathers.

Great was the triumph of the Count de Cabra, when, on returning from the pursuit of the enemy, he found, that the Moorish king had fallen into his hands. When the unfortunate Boabdil was brought before him, however, and he beheld him a dejected captive, whom, but shortly before, he had seen in royal

splendour, surrounded by his army, the generous heart of the count was touched by sympathy. He said every thing that became a courteous and Christian knight, to comfort him; observing, that the same mutability of things, which had suddenly destroyed his recent prosperity, might cause his present misfortunes as rapidly to pass away; since, in this world, nothing is stable, and even sorrow has its allotted term.

Thus consoling him by gentle and soothing words, and observing towards him the honour and reverence that his dignity and his misfortunes inspired, he conducted him a prisoner to his strong castle of Vaena.

CHAPTER XVII.

Lamentations of the Moors for the battle of Lucena.

THE sentinels looked out from the watch-towers of Loxa, along the valley of the Xenil, which passes through the mountains of Algaringo. They looked, to behold the king returning in triumph, at the head of his shining host, laden with the spoil of the unbeliever. They looked, to behold the standard of their warlike idol, the fierce Ali Atar, borne by the chivalry of Loxa, ever foremost in the wars of the border.

In the evening of the 21st of April, they descried a single horseman, urging his faltering steed along the banks of the river. As he drew near, they perceived, by the flash of arms, that he was a warrior; and, on nearer approach, by the richness of his armour, and the caparison of his steed, they knew him to be a warrior of rank.

He reached Loxa faint and aghast; his

Arabian courser covered with foam and dust and blood, panting and staggering with fatigue, and gashed with wounds. Having brought his master in safety, he sunk down and died, before the gate of the city. The soldiers at the gate gathered round the cavalier, as he stood, mute and melancholy, by his expiring steed. They knew him to be the gallant Cidi Caleb, nephew of the chief alfaqui of the albaycen of Granada. When the people of Loxa beheld this noble cavalier thus alone, haggard and dejected, their hearts were filled with fearful forebodings.

"Cavalier," said they, "how fares it with the king and army?" He cast his hand mournfully towards the land of the Christians. "There they lie!" exclaimed he: "the heavens have fallen upon them! all are lost! all dead*!"

Upon this, there was a great cry of consternation among the people, and loud wailings of women; for the flower of the youth of Loxa were with the army. An old Moorish soldier, scarred in many a border battle, stood leaning

* Cura de los Palacios.

on his lance by the gateway. "Where is Ali Atar?" demanded he eagerly. "If he still live, the army cannot be lost!"

"I saw his turban cloven by the Christian sword," replied Cidi Caleb. "His body is floating in the Xenil."

When the soldier heard these words, he smote his breast, and threw dust upon his head; for he was an old follower of Ali Atar.

The noble Cidi Caleb gave himself no repose; but, mounting another steed, hastened to carry the disastrous tidings to Granada. As he passed through the villages and hamlets, he spread sorrow around; for their chosen men had followed the king to the wars.

When he entered the gates of Granada, and announced the loss of the king and army, a voice of horror went throughout the city. Every one thought but of his own share in the general calamity, and crowded round the bearer of ill tidings. One asked after a father, another after a brother, some after a lover, and many a mother after her son. His replies were still of wounds and death. To one he replied, "I saw thy father pierced with a lance, as he defended the person of the king."

To another, "Thy brother fell wounded under the hoofs of the horses; but there was no time to aid him, for the Christian cavalry were upon us." To a third, "I saw the horse of thy lover covered with blood, and galloping without his rider." To a fourth, "Thy son fought by my side on the banks of the Xenil: we were surrounded by the enemy, and driven into the stream. I heard him call aloud upon Allah in the midst of the waters: when I reached the other bank, he was no longer by my side!"

The noble Cidi Caleb passed on, leaving Granada in lamentation. He urged his steed up the steep avenue of trees and fountains, that leads to the Alhambra, nor stopped until he arrived before the gate of justice. Ayxa, the mother of Boabdil, and Morayma, his beloved and tender wife, had daily watched, from the tower of the Gomeres, to behold his triumphant return. Who shall describe their affliction, when they heard the tidings of Cidi Caleb? The sultana Ayxa spake not much, but sate as one entranced in wo. Every now and then a deep sigh burst forth; but she raised her eyes to Heaven. "It is the will of Allah!" said she; and with these words she endea-

voured to repress the agonies of a mother's sorrow. The tender Morayma threw herself on the earth, and gave way to the full turbulence of her feelings, bewailing her husband and her father. The high-minded Ayxa rebuked the violence of her grief. "Moderate these transports, my daughter," said she; "remember, magnanimity should be the attribute of princes: it becomes not them to give way to clamorous sorrow, like common and vulgar minds." But Morayma could only deplore her loss with the anguish of a tender woman. She shut herself up in her mirador, and gazed all day with streaming eyes upon the vega. Every object before her recalled the causes of her affliction. The river Xenil, which ran shining amidst the groves and gardens, was the same on the banks of which had perished her father, Ali Atar: before her lay the road to Loxa, by which Boabdil had departed in martial state, surrounded by the chivalry of Granada. Ever and anon she would burst into an agony of grief. "Alas, my father!" she would exclaim, "the river runs smiling before me, that covers thy mangled remains! who will gather them to an honoured tomb, in the land of the

unbeliever? And thou, oh, Boabdil! light of my eyes! joy of my heart! life of my life! Wo the day, and wo the hour, that I saw thee depart from these walls! The road by which thou hast departed is solitary; never will it be gladdened by thy return! The mountain thou hast traversed lies like a cloud in the distance, and all beyond it is darkness!"

The royal minstrels were summoned, to assuage the sorrows of the queen: they attuned their instruments to cheerful strains; but, in a little while, the anguish of their hearts prevailed, and turned their songs to lamentations.

"Beautiful Granada!" they exclaimed, "how is thy glory faded! The vivarrambla no longer echoes to the tramp of steed and sound of trumpet; no longer is it crowded with thy youthful nobles, eager to display their prowess in the tourney and the festive tilt of reeds. Alas! the flower of thy chivalry lies low in a foreign land! The soft note of the lute is no longer heard in thy mournful streets, the lively castanet is silent upon thy hills, and the graceful dance of the zambra is no more seen beneath thy bowers! Behold, the Al-

hambra is forlorn and desolate! In vain do the orange and myrtle breathe their perfumes into its silken chambers; in vain does the nightingale sing within its groves; in vain are its marble halls refreshed by the sound of fountains and the gush of limpid rills! Alas! the countenance of the king no longer shines within those halls; the light of the Alhambra is set for ever!"

Thus all Granada, say the Arabian chroniclers, gave itself up to lamentations; there was nothing but the voice of wailing from the palace to the cottage. All joined to deplore their youthful monarch, cut down in the freshness and promise of his youth. Many feared that the prediction of the astrologer was about to be fulfilled, and that the downfal of the kingdom would follow the death of Boabdil; while all declared, that, had he survived, he was the very sovereign calculated to restore the realm to its ancient prosperity and glory.

CHAPTER XVIII.

How Muley Aben Hassan profited by the misfortunes of his son Boabdil.

An unfortunate death atones with the world for a multitude of errors. While the populace thought their youthful monarch had perished in the field, nothing could exceed their grief for his loss, and their adoration of his memory: when, however, they learned, that he was still alive, and had surrendered himself captive to the Christians, their feelings underwent an instant change. They decried his talents as a commander, his courage as a soldier. They railed at his expedition, as rash and ill conducted; and they reviled him, for not having dared to die on the field of battle, rather than surrender to the enemy.

The alfaquis, as usual, mingled with the populace, and artfully guided their discontents.

"Behold," exclaimed they, "the prediction is accomplished, which was pronounced at the birth of Boabdil! He has been seated on the throne, and the kingdom has suffered downfal and disgrace by his defeat and captivity. Comfort yourselves, oh Moslems! The evil day has passed by: the fates are satisfied, the sceptre, which has been broken in the feeble hand of Boabdil, is destined to resume its former power and sway, in the vigorous grasp of Aben Hassan."

The people were struck with the wisdom of these words. They rejoiced, that the baleful prediction, which had so long hung over them, was at an end; and declared, that none but Muley Aben Hassan had the valour and capacity necessary for the protection of the kingdom in this time of trouble.

The longer the captivity of Boabdil continued, the greater grew the popularity of his father. One city after another renewed allegiance to him: for power attracts power, and fortune creates fortune. At length he was enabled to return to Granada, and establish himself once more in the Alhambra. At his

approach, his repudiated spouse, the sultana Ayxá, gathered together the family and treasures of her captive son, and retired with a handful of the nobles into the albaycen, the rival quarter of the city, the inhabitants of which still retained feelings of loyalty to Boabdil. Here she fortified herself, and held the semblance of a court, in the name of her son. The fierce Muley Aben Hassan would have willingly carried fire and sword into this factious quarter of the capital; but he dared not confide in his new and uncertain popularity. Many of the nobles detested him for his past cruelty; and a large portion of the soldiery, beside many of the people of his own party, respected the virtues of Ayxa la Horra, and pitied the misfortunes of Boabdil. Granada, therefore, presented the singular spectacle of two sovereignties within the same city. The old king fortified himself in the lofty towers of the Alhambra, as much against his own subjects as against the Christians: while Ayxa, with the zeal of a mother's affection, which waxes warmer and warmer towards her offspring when in adversity, still main-

tained the standard of Boabdil on the rival fortress of the alcazaba; and kept his powerful faction alive within the walls of the albaycen.

CHAPTER XIX.

Captivity of Boabdil el Chico.

The unfortunate Boabdil remained a prisoner, closely guarded in the castle of Vaena. From the towers of his prison he beheld the town below filled with armed men; and the lofty hill on which it was built, girdled by massive walls and ramparts, on which a vigilant watch was maintained, night and day. The mountains around were studded with watchtowers, overlooking the lonely roads which led to Granada; so that a turban could not stir over the border without the alarm being given, and the whole country put on the alert. Boabdil saw, that there was no hope of escape from such a fortress, and that any attempt to rescue him would be equally in vain. His heart was filled with anxiety, as he thought on the confusion and ruin which his captivity must cause in his affairs; while sorrows of a softer kind overcame his fortitude,

as he thought on the evils it might bring upon his family.

The Count de Cabra, though he maintained the most vigilant guard over his royal prisoner, yet treated him with profound deference. He had appointed the noblest apartments in the castle for his abode, and sought in every way to cheer him during his captivity. A few days only had passed away, when missives arrived from the Castilian sovereigns. Ferdinand had been transported with joy at hearing of the capture of the Moorish monarch; seeing the deep and politic uses that might be made of such an event: but the magnanimous spirit of Isabella was filled with compassion for the unfortunate captive. Their messages to Boabdil were full of sympathy and consolation; breathing that high and gentle courtesy, which dwells in noble minds.

This magnanimity in his foe cheered the dejected spirit of the captive monarch. "Tell my sovereigns, the king and the queen," said he to the messenger, "that I can not be unhappy, being in the power of such high and mighty princes; especially since they partake so largely of that grace and goodness, which

Allah bestows upon the monarchs whom he greatly loves. Tell them, further, that I had long thought of submitting myself to their sway, to receive the kingdom of Granada from their hands, in the same manner that my ancestor received it from King John II., father of the gracious queen. My greatest sorrow, in this my captivity, is, that I must appear to do that from force, which I would fain have done from inclination."

In the mean time, Muley Aben Hassan, finding the faction of his son still formidable in Granada, was anxious to consolidate his power, by gaining possession of the person of Boabdil. For this purpose, he sent an embassy to the catholic monarchs, offering large terms for the ransom, or rather the purchase, of his son; proposing, among other conditions, to release the Count of Cifuentes, and nine other of his most distinguished captives, and to enter into a treaty of confederacy with the sovereigns. Neither did the implacable father make any scruple of testifying his indifference, whether his son were delivered up alive or dead, so that his person were placed assuredly within his power.

The humane heart of Isabella revolted at the idea of giving up the unfortunate prince into the hands of his most unnatural and inveterate enemy. A disdainful refusal was therefore returned to the old monarch, whose message had been couched in a vaunting spirit. He was informed, that the Castilian sovereigns would listen to no proposals of peace from Muley Aben Hassan, until he should lay down his arms, and offer them in all humility. Overtures in a different spirit were made by the mother of Boabdil, the sultana Ayxa la Horra, with the concurrence of the party which still remained faithful to him. It was thereby proposed, that Mahomet Abdalla, otherwise called Boabdil, should hold his crown as vassal to the Castilian sovereigns; paying an annual tribute, and releasing seventy Christian captives annually for five years: that he should moreover pay a large sum upon the spot for his ransom, and at the same time give freedom to four hundred Christians, to be chosen by the king: that he should also engage to be always ready to render military aid; and should come to the Cortes, or assemblage of nobles and distinguished vassals of the crown, whenever sum-

moned. His only son, and the sons of twelve distinguished Moorish houses, were to be delivered as hostages.

King Ferdinand was at Cordova when he received this proposition; Queen Isabella was absent at the time. He was anxious to consult her in so momentous an affair; or rather, he was fearful of proceeding too precipitately, and not drawing from this fortunate event all the advantage of which it was susceptible. Without returning any reply, therefore, to the mission, he sent missives to the castle of Vaena, where Boabdil remained in courteous durance of the brave Count de Cabra, ordering, that the captive monarch should be brought to Cordova.

The Count de Cabra set out with his illustrious prisoner; but when he arrived at Cordova, King Ferdinand declined seeing the Moorish monarch.

He was still undetermined what course to pursue; whether to retain him prisoner, set him at liberty on ransom, or treat him with politic magnanimity; and each couse would require a different kind of reception. Until this point should be resolved, therefore, he gave him in charge to Martin de Alarcon,

alcayde of the ancient fortress of Porçuna, with orders to guard him strictly, but to treat him with the distinction and deference due to a prince. These commands were strictly obeyed, and, with the exception of being restrained in his liberty, the monarch was as nobly entertained as he could have been in his royal palace at Granada.

In the mean time, Ferdinand availed himself of this critical moment, while Granada was distracted with factions and dissensions, and before he had concluded any treaty with Boabdil, to make a puissant and ostentatious inroad into the very heart of the kingdom, at the head of his most illustrious nobles. He sacked and destroyed several towns and castles, and extended his ravages to the very gates of Granada. Old Muley Aben Hassan did not venture to oppose him. His city was filled with troops; but he was uncertain of their affection. He dreaded, that, should he sally forth, the gates of Granada might be closed against him by the faction of the albaycin.

"The old Moor stood on the lofty tower of the Alhambra," says Antonio Agapida, "grinding his teeth, and foaming like a tiger shut up in

his cage, as he beheld the glittering battalions of the Christians wheeling about the vega, and the standard of the cross shining forth from amidst the smoke of infidel villages and hamlets. The most catholic king," continues Agapida, "would gladly have persevered in this righteous ravage; but his munitions began to fail. Satisfied, therefore, with having laid waste the country of the enemy, and insulted old Muley Aben Hassan in his very capital, he returned to Cordova, covered with laurels, and his army loaded with spoils; and now bethought himself of coming to an immediate decision in regard to his royal prisoner."

CHAPTER XX.

Of the treatment of Boabdil by the Castilian sovereigns.

A STATELY conversation was held by King Ferdinand, in the ancient city of Cordova, composed of several of the most reverend prelates and renowned cavaliers of the kingdom, to determine upon the fate of the unfortunate Boabdil.

Don Alonzo de Cardenas, the worthy master of Santiago, was one of the first who gave his counsel. He was a pious and zealous knight, rigid in his devotion to the faith; and his holy zeal had been inflamed to peculiar vehemence since his disastrous crusade among the mountains of Malaga. He inveighed with ardour against any compromise or compact with the infidels. The object of this war, he observed, was not the subjection of the Moors, but their utter expulsion from the land, so that there might no longer remain a single stain of Ma-

hometanism throughout Christian Spain. He gave it as his opinion, therefore, that the captive king ought not to be set at liberty.

Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, the valiant marquis of Cadiz, on the contrary, spoke warmly for the release of Boabdil. He pronounced it a measure of sound policy, even if done without conditions. It would tend to keep up the civil war in Granada, which was as a fire consuming the entrails of the enemy, and effecting more for the interests of Spain, without expense, than all the conquests of its arms.

The grand cardinal of Spain, Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, coincided in opinion with the Marquis of Cadiz. "Nay," added that pious prelate and politic statesman, "it would be sound wisdom to furnish the Moor with men and money, and all other necessaries to promote the civil war in Granada: by this means would be produced great benefit to the service of God; since we are assured by his infallible word, that 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand*.'"

* Salazar, Cronica del Gran Cardenal, p. 188.

Ferdinand weighed these counsels in his mind, but was slow in coming to a decision. "He was religiously attentive to his own interests," observes Fray Antonio Agapida; "knowing himself to be but an instrument of Providence in this holy war; and that, therefore, in consulting his own advantage, he was promoting the interests of the faith." The opinion of Queen Isabella relieved him from his perplexity. That high-minded princess was zealous for the promotion of the faith, but not for the extermination of the infidels. The Moorish kings had held their thrones as vassals to her progenitors: she was content, at present, to accord the same privilege, and that the royal prisoner should be liberated, on condition of becoming a vassal to the crown. By this means might be effected the deliverance of many Christian captives, who were languishing in Moorish chains.

King Ferdinand adopted the magnanimous measure recommended by the queen, but he accompanied it with several shrewd conditions; exacting tribute, military services, and safe passage and maintenance for Christian troops throughout the places which should adhere to

Boabdil. The captive king readily submitted to these stipulations; and swore, after the manner of his faith, to observe them with exactitude. A truce was arranged for two years, during which the Castilian sovereigns engaged to maintain him on his throne, and to assist him in recovering all places which he had lost during his captivity.

When Boabdil el Chico had solemnly agreed to this arrangement in the castle of Porcuna, preparations were made to receive him in Cordova in regal style. Superb steeds, richly caparisoned, and raiment of brocade and silk, and the most costly cloths, with all other articles of sumptuous array, were furnished to him, and to fifty Moorish cavaliers, who had come to treat for his ransom, that he might appear in state befitting the monarch of Granada, and the most distinguished vassal of the Christian sovereigns. Money, also, was advanced, to maintain him in suitable grandeur during his residence at the Castilian court, and his return to his dominions. Finally, it was ordered by the sovereigns, that, when he came to Cordova, all the nobles and dignitaries of the court should go forth to receive him.

A question now arose among certain of those ancient and experienced men, who grow gray about a court in the profound study of forms and ceremonials; with whom a point of punctilio is as a vast political right, and who contract a sublime and awful idea of the external dignity of the throne. Certain of these court sages propounded the momentous question, whether the Moorish monarch, coming to do homage as a vassal, ought not to kneel, and kiss the hand of the king. "This was immediately decided in the affirmative, by a large number of ancient cavaliers, accustomed," says Antonio Agapida, "to the lofty punctilio of our most dignified court and transcendent sovereigns." The king, therefore, was informed, by those who arranged the ceremonials, that, when the Moorish monarch appeared in his presence, he was expected to extend his royal hand to receive the kiss of homage.

"I should certainly do so," replied King Ferdinand, "were he at liberty, and in his own kingdom: but I certainly shall not do so, seeing that he is a prisoner, and in mine."

The courtiers loudly applauded the magnanimity of this reply; though many condemned

it in secret, as savouring of too much generosity towards an infidel; and the worthy Jesuit Fray Antonio Agapida fully concurs in their opinion.

The Moorish king entered Cordova with his little train of faithful knights, and escorted by all the nobility and chivalry of the Castilian court. He was conducted with great state and ceremony to the royal palace. When he came in presence of King Ferdinand, he knelt, and offered to kiss his hand, not merely in homage as his subject, but in gratitude for his liberty. Ferdinand declined the token of vassalage, and raised him graciously from the earth. An interpreter began, in the name of Boabdil, to laud the magnanimity of the Castilian monarch, and to promise the most implicit submission. "Enough," said King Ferdinand, interrupting the interpreter in the midst of his harangue; "there is no need of these compliments. I trust in his integrity, that he will do every thing becoming a good man, and a good king." With these words, he received Boabdil el Chico into his royal friendship and protection.

CHAPTER XXI.

Return of Boabdil from captivity.

In the month of August, a noble Moor, of the race of the Abencerrages, arrived with a splendid retinue at the city of Cordova, bringing with him the son of Boabdil el Chico, and other of the noble youths of Granada, as hostages for the fulfilment of the terms of ransom. When the Moorish king beheld his son, his only child, who was to remain in his stead, a sort of captive in a hostile land, he folded him in his arms, and wept over him. "Wo the day that I was born!" exclaimed he, "and evil the star that presided at my birth! well was I called El Zogoybi, or 'the unlucky:' for sorrow is heaped upon me by my father, and sorrow do I transmit to my son!"

The afflicted heart of Boabdil, however, was soothed by the kindness of the Christian sovereigns, who received the hostage prince

with a tenderness suited to his age, and a distinction worthy of his rank.

They delivered him in charge to the worthy alcayde Martin de Alarcon, who had treated his father with such courtesy, during his confinement in the castle of Porcuna; giving orders, that, after the departure of the latter, his son should be entertained with great honour and princely attention in the same fortress.

On the 2d of September, a guard of honour assembled at the gate of the mansion of Boabdil, to escort him to the frontiers of his kingdom. He pressed his child to his heart at parting; but he uttered not a word, for there were many Christian eyes to behold his emotion. He mounted his steed, and never turned his head to look again upon the youth; but those who were near him observed the vehement struggle that shook his frame, wherein the anguish of the father had well nigh subdued the studied equanimity of the king.

Boabdil el Chico and King Ferdinand sallied forth, side by side, from Cordova, amidst the acclamations of a prodigious multitude. When they were a short distance

from the city, they separated, with many gracious expressions on the part of the Castilian monarch, and many thankful acknowledgments from his late captive, whose heart had been humbled by adversity. Ferdinand departed for Guadalupe, and Boabdil for Granada. The latter was accompanied by a guard of honour; and the viceroys of Andalusia, and the generals, on the frontier, were ordered to furnish him with escorts, and to show him all possible honour on his journey. In this way, he was conducted, in royal state, through the country he had entered to ravage, and was placed in safety in his own dominions.

He was met, on the frontier, by the principal nobles and cavaliers of his court, who had been secretly sent by his mother, the sultana Ayxa, to escort him to the capital.

The heart of Boabdil was lifted up for a moment, when he found himself in his own territories, surrounded by Moslem knights, with his own standards waving over his head; and he began to doubt the predictions of astrologers. He soon found cause, however, to moderate his exultation. The loyal train, which had come to welcome him, was but

scanty in number; and he missed many of his most zealous and obsequious courtiers. He had returned, indeed, to his kingdom; but it was no longer the devoted kingdom he had left. The story of his vassalage to the Christian sovereigns had been made use of by his father to ruin him with his people. He had been represented as a traitor to his country, a renegado to his faith, and as leagued with the enemies of both, to subdue the Moslems of Spain to the yoke of Christian bondage. In this way the mind of the public had been turned from him. The greater part of the nobility had thronged round the throne of his father in the Alhambra; and his mother, the resolute sultana Ayxa, with difficulty maintained her faction in the opposite towers of the alcazaba.

Such was the melancholy picture of affairs given to Boabdil by the courtiers who had come forth to meet him. They even informed him, that it would be an enterprise of difficulty and danger to make his way back to the capital, and regain the little court which still remained faithful to him in the heart of the city. The old tiger, Muley Aben Hassan,

lay couched within the Alhambra, and the walls and gates of the city were strongly guarded by his troops. Boabdil shook his head at these tidings. He called to mind the ill omen of his breaking his lance against the gate of Elvira, when issuing forth so vain-gloriously with his army, which he now saw clearly foreboded the destruction of that army, on which he had so confidently relied. "Henceforth," said he, "let no man have the impiety to scoff at omens."

Boabdil approached his capital by stealth, and in the night, prowling about its walls like an enemy seeking to destroy, rather than a monarch returning to his throne. At length he seized upon a postern gate of the albaycin, a part of the city which had always been in his favour. He passed rapidly through the streets, before the populace were aroused from their sleep, and reached in safety the fortress of the alcazaba. Here he was received into the embraces of his intrepid mother, and his favourite wife Morayma. The transports of the latter, on the safe return of her husband, were mingled with tears; for she thought of her father, Ali Atar, who had fallen in his

cause; and of her only son, who was left a hostage in the hands of the Christians.

The heart of Boabdil, softened by his misfortunes, was moved by the changes in every thing round him; but his mother called up his spirit. "This," said she, "is no time for tears and fondness: a king must think of his sceptre and his throne, and not yield to softness like common men. Thou hast done well, my son, in throwing thyself resolutely into Granada: it must depend upon thyself whether thou remain here a king or a captive."

The old king, Muley Aben Hassan, had retired to his couch that night, in one of the strongest towers of the Alhambra; but his restless anxiety kept him from repose. In the first watch of the night, he heard a shout faintly rising from the quarter of the albaycin, which is on the opposite side of the deep valley of the Darro. Shortly afterwards, horsemen came galloping up the hill that leads to the main gate of the Alhambra, spreading the alarm, that Boabdil had entered the city, and possessed himself of the alcazaba.

In the first transports of his rage, the old

king would have struck the messenger to earth. He hastily summoned his counsellors and commanders, exhorting them to stand by him in this critical moment; and, during the night, made every preparation to enter the albaycin, sword in hand, in the morning.

In the mean time, the sultana Ayxa had taken prompt and vigorous measures to strengthen her party. The albaycin was the part of the city filled by the lower orders. The return of Boabdil was proclaimed throughout the streets, and large sums of money were distributed among the populace. The nobles, assembled in the alcazaba, were promised honours and rewards by Boabdil, as soon as he should be firmly seated on the throne. These welltimed measures had the customary effect; and by daybreak all the motley populace of the albaycin were in arms.

A doleful day succeeded. All Granada was a scene of tumult and horror. Drums and trumpets resounded in every part; all business was interrupted; the shops were shut, the doors barricadoed. Armed bands paraded the streets; some shouting for Boabdil, and some for Muley Aben Hassan. When they encoun-

tered each other, they fought furiously, and without mercy; every public square became a scene of battle. The great mass of the lower orders was in favour of Boabdil; but it was a multitude without discipline or lofty spirit. Part of the people was regularly armed; but the greater number had sallied forth with the implements of their trade. The troops of the old king, among whom were many cavaliers of pride and valour, soon drove the populace from the squares. They fortified themselves, however, in the streets and lanes, which they barricadoed. They made fortresses of their houses, and fought desperately from the windows and the roofs; and many a warrior of the highest blood of Granada was laid low by plebeian hands, and plebeian weapons, in this civil brawl.

It was impossible that such violent convulsions should last long in the heart of a city. The people soon longed for repose, and a return to their peaceful occupations; and the cavaliers detested these conflicts with the multitude, in which there were all the horrors of war, without its laurels. By the interference of the alfaquis, an armistice was at length

effected. Boabdil was persuaded, that there was no dependence upon the inconstant favour of the multitude, and was prevailed upon to quit a capital, where he could only maintain a precarious seat upon his throne, by a perpetual and bloody struggle. He fixed his court at the city of Almeria, which was entirely devoted to him; and which at that time vied with Granada in splendour and importance. This compromise of grandeur for tranquillity, however, was sorely against the counsels of his proud spirited mother, the sultana Ayxa. Granada appeared in her eyes the only legitimate seat of dominion; and she observed, with a smile of disdain, that he was not worthy of being called a monarch, who was not master of his capital.

CHAPTER XXII.

Foray of the Moorish alcaydes, and battle of Lopera.

Though Muley Aben Hassan had regained undivided sway over the city of Granada; and the alfaquis, by his command, had denounced his son Boabdil as an apostate, and as one doomed by Heaven to misfortune; still the latter had many adherents among the common people. Whenever, therefore, any act of the old monarch was displeasing to the turbulent multitude, they were prone to give him a hint of the slippery nature of his standing, by shouting out the name of Boabdil el Chico. Long experience had instructed Muley Aben Hassan in the character of the inconstant people over whom he ruled. "Allah achbar!" exclaimed he, "God is great! but a successful inroad into the country of the unbelievers will make more converts to my cause, than a thousand texts of the Koran, expounded by ten thousand alfaquis."

At this time, King Ferdinand was absent from Andalusia on a distant expedition, with many of his troops. The moment was favourable for a foray; and Muley Aben Hassan cast about his thoughts for a leader to conduct it. Ali Atar, the terror of the border, the scourge of Andalusia, was dead; but there was another veteran general, scarce inferior to him for predatory warfare. This was old Bexir, the gray and crafty alcayde of Malaga; and the people under his command were ripe for an expedition of the kind. The signal defeat and slaughter of the Spanish knights, in the neighbouring mountains, had filled the people of Malaga with vanity and self-conceit: they had attributed to their own valour the defeat which had been caused by the nature of the country. Many of them wore the armour, and paraded in public with the horses, of the unfortunate cavaliers slain on that occasion; which they vauntingly displayed as the trophies of their boasted victory. They had talked themselves into a contempt for the chivalry of Andalusia, and were impatient for an opportunity to overrun a country defended by such troops. This Muley Aben Hassan considered a favour-

able state of mind to ensure a daring inroad; and he sent orders to old Bexir, to gather together his people, and the choicest warriors of the borders, and to carry fire and sword into the very heart of Andalusia. The wary old Bexir immediately despatched his emissaries among the alcaydes of the border towns, calling upon them to assemble, with their troops, at the city of Ronda, close upon the Christian frontier.

Ronda was the most virulent nest of Moorish depredators in the whole border country. It was situated in the midst of the wild Serrania, or chain of mountains of the same name, which are uncommonly lofty, broken, and precipitous. It stood on an almost isolated rock, nearly encircled by a deep valley, or rather chasm, through which ran the beautiful river called Rio Verde. The Moors of this city were the most active, robust, and warlike of all the mountaineers; and their very children discharged the crossbow with unerring aim. They were incessantly harassing the rich plains of Andalusia: their city abounded with Christian spoils; and their deep dungeons were crowded with Christian captives, who might

sigh in vain for deliverance from this impregnable fortress. Such was Ronda in the time of the Moors; and it has ever retained something of the same character, even to the present day. Its inhabitants continue to be among the boldest, fiercest, and most adventurous, of the Andalusian mountaineers; and the Serrania de Ronda is famous, as the most dangerous resort of the bandit and the contrabandista.

Hamet Zeli, surnamed El Zegri, was the commander of this belligerent city and its fierce inhabitants. He was of the tribe of the Zegris, and one of the most proud and daring of that warlike race. Beside the inhabitants of Ronda, he had a legion of African Moors in his immediate service. They were of the tribe of the Gomeres; mercenary troops, whose hot African blood had not yet been tempered by the softer living of Spain; and whose whole business was to fight. These he kept always well armed and well appointed. The rich pasturage of the valley of Ronda produced a breed of horses, famous for strength and speed: no cavalry, therefore, was better mounted than the band of Gomeres. Rapid on the march, fierce in the attack, it would sweep down upon

the Andalusian plains like a sudden blast from the mountains, and pass away as suddenly, before there was time for pursuit.

There was nothing that stirred up the spirit of the Moors of the frontiers more thoroughly than the idea of a foray. The summons of Bexir was gladly obeyed by the alcaydes of the border towns; and in a little while there was a force of fifteen hundred horse, and four thousand foot, the very pith and marrow of the surrounding country, assembled within the walls of Ronda. The people of the place anticipated with eagerness the rich spoils of Andalusia, that were soon to crowd their gates. Throughout the day, the city resounded with the noise of kettledrum and trumpet; the highmettled steeds stamped and neighed in their stalls, as if they shared the impatience for the foray; while the Christian captives sighed, as the varied din of preparation reached to their rocky dungeons, denoting that a fresh assault was preparing against their countrymen.

The infidel host sallied forth, full of spirits; anticipating an easy ravage, and abundant booty. They encouraged each other in a

contempt for the prowess of the foe. Many of the warriors of Malaga, and of some of the mountain towns, had insultingly arrayed themselves in the splendid armour of the Christian knights, slain or taken prisoners in the famous massacre; and some of them rode the Andalusian steeds which had been captured on that occasion.

The wary Bexir had concerted his plans so secretly and expeditiously, that the Christian towns of Andalusia had not the least suspicion of the storm, that had gathered beyond the mountains. The vast and rocky range of the Serrania de Ronda extended like a skreen, covering all their movements from observation.

The army made its way as rapidly as the rugged nature of the mountains would permit, guided by Hamet el Zegri, the bold alcayde of Ronda, who knew every pass and defile. Not a drum, nor the clash of a cymbal, nor the blast of a trumpet, was permitted to be heard. The mass of war rolled quietly on, as the gathering cloud to the brow of the mountains, intending to burst down, like the thunderbolt, upon the plain.

Never let the most wary commander fancy

himself secure from discovery; for rocks have eyes, and trees have ears, and the birds of the air have tongues, to betray the most secret enterprise. There chanced, at this time, to be six Christian scouts prowling about the savage heights of the Serrania de Ronda. They were of that kind of lawless ruffians who infest the borders of belligerent countries, ready at any time to fight for pay, or prowl for plunder. The wild mountain passes of Spain have ever abounded with loose, rambling vagabonds of the kind; soldiers in war, robbers in peace; guides, guards, smugglers, or cut-throats, according to the circumstances of the case.

"These six marauders," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "were, on this occasion, chosen instruments, sanctified by the righteousness of their cause. They were lurking among the mountains, to entrap Moorish cattle, or Moorish prisoners; both of which were equally saleable in the Christian market."

They had ascended one of the loftiest cliffs, and were looking out, like birds of prey, ready to pounce upon any thing that might offer in the valley, when they descried the Moorish

army emerging from a mountain glen. They watched it in silence, as it wound below them, remarking the standards of the various towns, and the pennons of the commanders. They hovered about it, on its march, skulking from cliff to cliff, until they saw the route by which it intended to enter the Christian country. They then dispersed, each making his way, by the secret passes of the mountains, to some different alcayde, that they might spread the alarm far and wide, and each get a separate reward.

One hastened to Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, the same valiant alcayde who had repulsed Muley Aben Hassan from the walls of Alhama, and who now commanded at Ecija, in the absence of the master of Santiago. Others roused the town of Utrera, and the places of that neighbourhood, putting them all on the alert.

Puerto Carrero was a cavalier of consummate vigour and activity. He immediately sent couriers to the alcaydes of the neighbouring fortresses, to Herman Carrello, captain of a body of the Holy Brotherhood, and

to certain knights of the order of Alcantara. Puerto Carrero was the first to take the field. Knowing the hard and hungry service of these border scampers, he made every man take a hearty repast, and see that his horse was well shod, and perfectly appointed. Then, all being refreshed, and in valiant heart, he sallied forth to seek the Moors. He had but a handful of men, the retainers of his household, and troops of his captaincy; but they were well armed and mounted, and accustomed to the sudden rouses of the border; men with whom the cry of "Arm and out! to horse and to the field!" was sufficient at any time to put them in a fever of animation.

While the northern part of Andalusia was thus on the alert, one of the scouts had hastened southward, to the city of Xeres, and given the alarm to the valiant Marquis of Cadiz. When the marquis heard, that the Moor was over the border, and that the standard of Malaga was in the advance, his heart bounded with a momentary joy; for he remembered the massacre in the mountains, where his valiant brothers had been mangled before his eyes.

The very authors of his calamity were now at hand, and he flattered himself that the day of vengeance had arrived.

He made a hasty levy of his retainers, and of the fighting men of Xeres, and hurried off, with three hundred horse and two hundred foot, all resolute men, and panting for revenge.

In the mean time, the veteran Bexir had accomplished his march, as he imagined, undiscovered. From the openings of the craggy defiles, he pointed out the fertile plains of Andalusia, and regaled the eyes of his soldiery with the rich country they were about to ravage. The fierce Gomeres of Ronda were flushed with joy at the sight; and even their steeds seemed to prick up their ears, and snuff the breeze, as they beheld the scenes of their frequent forays.

When they came to where the mountain defile opened into the low land, Bexir divided his force into three parts: one, composed of foot soldiers, and of such as were weakly mounted, he left to guard the pass; being too experienced a veteran not to know the importance of securing a retreat. A second body he placed in ambush, among the groves and

thickets on the banks of the river Lopera. The third, consisting of light cavalry, he sent forth to ravage the Campiña, or great plain of Utrera. Most of this latter force was composed of the fiery Gomeres of Ronda, mounted on the fleet steeds bred among the mountains. It was led by the bold alcayde Hamet el Zegri, who was ever eager to be foremost in the foray.

Little suspecting, that the country on both sides was on the alarm, and rushing from all directions, to close upon them in rear, this fiery troop dashed forward, until they came within two leagues of Utrera. Here they scattered themselves about the plain, careering round the great herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep, and sweeping them into droves, to be hurried to the mountains.

While they were thus dispersed in every direction, a troop of horse, and body of foot, from Utrera, came suddenly upon them. The Moors rallied together in small parties, and endeavoured to defend themselves: but they were without a leader; for Hamet el Zegri was at a distance, having, like a hawk, made a wide circuit in pursuit of prey. The marauders

soon gave way, and fled towards the ambush on the banks of the Lopera, being hotly pursued by the men of Utrera.

When they reached the Lopera, the Moors in ambush rushed forth, with furious cries; and the fugitives, recovering courage from this reinforcement, rallied, and turned upon their pursuers. The Christians stood their ground, though greatly inferior in number. Their lances were soon broken, and they came to sharp work with sword and cimeter. The Christians fought valiantly, but were in danger of being overwhelmed. The bold Hamet had collected a handful of his scattered Gomeres; and, leaving his prey, had galloped towards the scene of action. His little troop of horsemen had reached the crest of a rising ground, at no great distance, when trumpets were heard in another direction, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, and his followers, came galloping into the field, and charged upon the infidels in flank.

The Moors were astounded, at finding war thus breaking upon them from various quarters of what they had expected to find an unguarded country. They fought for a short time with desperation, and resisted a vehe-

ment assault from the knights of Alcantara, and the men at arms of the Holy Brotherhood. At length the veteran Bexir was struck from his horse by Puerto Carrero, and taken prisoner, and the whole force gave way and fled. In their flight they separated, and took two roads to the mountains; thinking, by dividing their forces, to distract the enemy. The Christians were too few to separate. Puerto Carrero kept them together, pursuing one division of the enemy with great slaughter. This battle took place at the fountain of the fig tree, near to the Lopera. Six hundred Moorish cavaliers were slain, and many taken prisoners. Much spoil was collected on the field, with which the Christians returned in triumph to their homes.

The larger body of the enemy had retreated along a road, leading more to the south, by the banks of the Guadalete. When they reached that river, the sound of pursuit had died away; and they rallied, to breathe and refresh themselves on the margin of the stream. Their force was reduced to about a thousand horse, and a confused multitude of foot. While they were scattered, and partly dismounted, on the banks of the Guadalete, a

fresh storm of war burst upon them from an opposite direction. It was the Marquis of Cadiz, leading on his household troops, and the fighting men of Xerez. When the Christian warriors came in sight of the Moors, they were roused to fury at beholding many of them arrayed in the armour of the cavaliers who had been slain among the mountains of Malaga. Nay, some, who had been in that defeat, beheld their own armour, which they had cast away in their flight, to enable themselves to climb the mountains. Exasperated at the sight, they rushed upon the foe, with the ferocity of tigers, rather than the temperate courage of cavaliers. Each man felt as if he were avenging the death of a relative, or wiping out his own disgrace. The good marquis himself beheld a powerful Moor bestriding the horse of his brother Beltran: giving a cry of rage and anguish at the sight, he rushed through the thickest of the enemy, attacked the Moor with resistless fury, and, after a short combat, hurled him breathless to the earth.

The Moors, already vanquished in spirit, could not withstand the assault of men thus

madly excited. They soon gave way, and fled for the defile of the Serrania de Ronda, where the body of troops had been stationed to secure a retreat. These, seeing them come galloping wildly up the defile, with Christian banners in pursuit, and the flash of weapons at their deadly work, thought all Andalusia was upon them, and fled, without awaiting an attack. The pursuit continued among glens and defiles; for the Christian warriors, eager for revenge, had no compassion on the foe.

When the pursuit was over, the Marquis of Cadiz and his followers reposed themselves upon the banks of the Guadalete, where they divided the spoil. Among this were found many rich corslets, helmets, and weapons, the Moorish trophies of the defeat in the mountains of Malaga. Several were claimed by their owners, others were known to have belonged to noble cavaliers, who had been slain, or taken prisoners. There were several horses also, richly caparisoned, which had pranced proudly with the unfortunate warriors, as they sallied out of Antequera upon that fatal expedition. Thus the exultation of the victors was dashed with melancholy, and

many a knight was seen lamenting over the helmet or corslet of some loved companion in arms.

The good Marquis of Cadiz was resting under a tree, on the banks of the Guadalete, when the horse, which had belonged to his slaughtered brother Beltran, was brought to him. He laid his hand upon the mane, and looked wistfully at the empty saddle. His bosom heaved with violent agitation, and his lip quivered, and was pale. "Ay de mi, mi hermano!" "Wo is me, my brother!" was all that he said, for the grief of a warrior has not many words. He looked around on the field strewn with the bodies of the enemy; and, in the bitterness of his wo, he felt consoled by the idea, that his brother had not been unrevenged *.

* "En el despojo de la batalla se vieron muchas ricas coraras e capacetas e barberas de las que se habian perdido en el Axarquia, e otras muchas armas, e algunas fueron conocidas de sus dueños que las havian dejado para fuir, e otras fueron conocidas, que eran muy señaladas de hombres principales que havian quedado muertos e cautivos e fueron tomados muchos de los mismos cavallos con sus ricas sillas, de los que quedaron en la Axarquia, e fueron conocidos cuios eran."—Cura de los Palacios, c. 67.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Retreat of Hamet el Zegri, alcayde of Ronda.

THE bold alcayde of Ronda, Hamet el Zegri, had careered wide over the campiña of Utrera, encompassing the flocks and herds, when he heard the burst of war at a distance. There were with him but a handful of his Gomeres. He saw the scamper and pursuit afar off, and beheld the Christian horsemen spurring madly on towards the ambuscade, on the banks of the Lopera. Hamet tossed his hand triumphantly aloft for his men to follow him. "The Christian dogs are ours!" said he, as he put spurs to his horse, to take the enemy in rear.

The little band which followed Hamet scarcely amounted to thirty horsemen. They spurred across the plain, and reached a rising ground, just as the force of Puerto Carrera had charged, with sound of trumpet, upon the flank of the party in ambush. Hamet beheld

the headlong rout of the army with rage and consternation. He found the country was pouring forth its legions from every quarter, and perceived, that there was no safety but in precipitate flight. But which way to fly? an army was between him and the mountain pass: all the forces of the neighbourhood were rushing to the borders; the whole route by which he had come was, by this time, occupied by the foe. He checked his steed, rose in his stirrups, and rolled a stern and thoughtful eye over the country; then, sinking into his saddle, he seemed to commune for a moment with himself. Turning quickly to his troop, he singled out a renegado Christian, a traitor to his religion and his king. "Come hither," said Hamet: "thou knowest all the secret passes of this country?" "I do," replied the renegado. "Dost thou know any circuitous route, solitary and untravelled, by which we can pass wide within these troops, and reach the Serrania?" The renegado paused: "Such a route I know, but it is full of peril; for it leads through the heart of the Christian land." "It is well," said Hamet: "the more dangerous in appearance, the less

it will be suspected. Now, hearken to me. Ride by my side. Thou seest this purse of gold and this cimeter. Take us, by the route thou hast mentioned, safe to the pass of the Serrania, and this purse shall be thy reward: betray us, and this cimeter shall cleave thee to the saddle bow*

The renegado obeyed, trembling. They turned off from the direct road to the mountains, and struck southward towards Lebrixa, passing by the most solitary roads, and along those deep ramblas and ravines by which the country is intersected. It was indeed a daring course. Every now and then they heard the distant sound of trumpets, and the alarm bells of towns and villages, and found that the war was still hurrying to the borders. They hid themselves in thickets, and in the dry beds of rivers, until the danger had passed by, and then resumed their course. Hamet el Zegri rode on in silence, his hand upon his cimeter, and his eye upon the renegado guide, prepared to sacrifice him on the least sign of treachery; while his band followed,

* Cura de los Palacios, ubi suprà.

gnawing their lips with rage, at having thus to skulk through a country they had come to ravage.

When night fell, they struck into more practicable roads, always keeping wide of the villages and hamlets, lest the watchdogs should betray them. In this way they passed, in deep midnight, by Arcos, crossed the Guadalete, and effected their retreat to the mountains. The day dawned as they made their way up the savage defiles. Their comrades had been hunted up these very glens by the enemy. Every now and then they came to where there had been a partial fight, or a slaughter of the fugitives; and the rocks were red with blood, and strewed with mangled bodies. The alcayde of Ronda was almost frantic with rage at seeing many of his bravest warriors, lying stiff and stark, a prey to the hawks and vultures of the mountains. Now and then some wretched Moor would crawl out of a cave or glen, whither he had fled for refuge; for, in the retreat, many of the horsemen had abandoned their steeds, thrown away their armour, and clambered up the cliffs,

where they could not be pursued by the Christian cavalry.

The Moorish army had sallied forth from Ronda amidst shouts and acclamations; but wailings were heard within its walls, as the alcayde and his broken band returned, without banner or trumpet, and haggard with famine and fatigue. The tidings of their disaster had preceded them, borne by the fugitives of the army. No one ventured to speak to the stern Hamet el Zegri as he entered the city, for they saw a dark cloud gathered upon his brow.

"It seemed," says the pious Antonio Agapida, "as if Heaven meted out this defeat, in exact retribution for the ills inflicted upon the Christian warriors in the heights of Malaga." It was equally signal and disastrous. Of the brilliant array of Moorish chivalry, which descended so confidently into Andalusia, not more than two hundred escaped. The choicest troops of the frontier were either taken or destroyed; the Moorish garrisons enfeebled, and many alcaydes and cavaliers of noble lineage carried into captivity, who were afterwards

obliged to redeem themselves with heavy ransoms.

This was called the battle of Lopera, and was fought on the 17th of September, 1483. Ferdinand and Isabella were at Vittoria, in Old Castile, when they received news of the victory, and the standards taken from the enemy. They celebrated the event with processions, illuminations, and other festivities. Ferdinand sent to the Marquis of Cadiz the royal raiment which he had worn on that day, and conferred on him, and on all those who should inherit his title, the privilege of wearing royal robes on our Lady's day in September, in commemoration of this victory.

Queen Isabella was equally mindful of the great services of Don Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero. Beside many encomiums and favours, she sent to his wife the royal vestments and robe of brocade, which she had worn on the same day, to be worn by her, during her life, on the anniversary of that battle *.

* Mariana. Abarca. Zurita. Pulgar, &c.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the high and ceremonious reception at court of the Count de Cabra and the alcayde de los Donzeles.

In the midst of the bustle of warlike affairs, the worthy chronicler Fray Antonio Agapida pauses to note, with curious accuracy, the distinguished reception given to the Count de Cabra, and his nephew, the alcayde de los Donzeles, at the stately and ceremonious court of Castile, in reward for the capture of the Moorish king Boabdil.

"The court," he observes, "was held, at the time, in the ancient Moorish palace of the city of Cordova; and the ceremonials were arranged by that venerable prelate Don Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, bishop of Toledo, and grand cardinal of Spain.

"It was on Wednesday, the fourteenth of October," continues the precise Antonio Agapida, "that the good Count de Cabra, according to arrangement, appeared at the gate of

Cordova. Here he was met by the grand cardinal, and the Duke of Villahermosa, illegitimate brother of the king, together with many of the first grandees and prelates of the kingdom. By this august train was he attended to the palace, amidst triumphant strains of martial music, and the shouts of a prodigious multitude.

"When the count arrived in presence of the sovereigns, who were seated in state, on a dais, or raised part of the hall of audience, they both arose. The king advanced exactly five steps toward the count, who knelt, and kissed his majesty's hand; but the king would not receive him as a mere vassal, but embraced him with affectionate cordiality. The queen, also, advanced two steps, and received the count with a countenance full of sweetness and benignity. After he had kissed her hand, the king and queen returned to their thrones; and, cushions being brought, they desired the worthy count to be seated in their presence." This last circumstance is written in large letters, and followed by several notes of admiration, in the manuscript of the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida; who considers the extraordinary privilege

of sitting in the presence of the catholic sovereigns an honour well worth fighting for.

"The good count took his seat at a short distance from the king; and near him was seated the Duke of Najera, then the Bishop of Palencia, then the Count of Aguilar, the Count Luna, and Don Gutiere de Cardenas, senior commander of Leon.

"On the side of the queen were seated the grand cardinal of Spain, the Duke of Villahermosa, the Count of Monte Rey, and the bishops of Jaen and Cuenca, each in the order in which they are named. The Infanta Isabella was prevented, by indisposition, from attending this ceremony.

"And now festive music resounded through the sumptuous hall; and, behold, twenty ladies of the queen's retinue entered, magnificently attired; upon which twenty youthful cavaliers, very gay and galliard in their array, stepped forth; and, each taking his fair partner, they commenced a stately dance. The court, in the mean time," observes Fray Antonio Agapida, "looked on with lofty and becoming gravity.

"When the dance was concluded, the king

and queen rose, to retire to supper, and dismissed the court with many gracious expressions. He was then attended, by all the grandees present, to the palace of the grand cardinal, where they partook of a sumptuous banquet.

"On the following Saturday, the alcayde de los Donzeles was received likewise with great honours; but the ceremonies were so arranged, as to be a degree less in dignity than those shown to his uncle; the latter being considered the principal actor in this great achievement. Thus, the grand cardinal and the Duke of Villahermosa did not meet him at the gate of the city, but received him in the palace, and entertained him in conversation until summoned to the sovereigns.

"When the alcayde de los Donzeles entered the presence chamber, the king and queen rose from their chairs; but, without advancing, they embraced him graciously, and commanded him to be seated next to the Count de Cabra.

"The Infanta Isabella came forth to this reception, and took her seat beside the queen. When the court were all seated, the music

again sounded through the hall, and the twenty ladies came forth, as on the preceding occasion; richly attired, but in different raiment. They danced, as before; and the Infanta Isabella, taking a young Portuguese damsel for a partner, joined in the dance. When this was concluded, the king and queen dismissed the alcayde de los Donzeles with great courtesy, and the court broke up."

The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida here indulges in a long eulogy on the scrupulous discrimination of the Castilian court, in the distribution of its honours and rewards; by which means every smile, and gesture, and word, of the sovereigns had its certain value, and conveyed its equivalent of joy to the heart of the subject: "a matter well worthy the study," says he, "of all monarchs; who are too apt to distribute honours with a heedless caprice, that renders them of no avail.

"On the following Sunday, both the Count de Cabra and the alcayde de los Donzeles were invited to sup with the sovereigns. The court, that evening, was attended by the highest nobility, arrayed with that cost and splendour

for which the Spanish nobility of those days was renowned.

"Before supper, there was a stately and ceremonious dance, befitting the dignity of so august a court. The king led forth the queen, in grave and graceful measure; the Count de Cabra was honoured with the hand of the Infanta Isabella; and the alcayde de los Donzeles danced with a daughter of the Marquis de Astorga.

"The dance being concluded, the royal party repaired to the supper table, which was placed on an elevated part of the saloon. Here, in full view of the court, the Count de Cabra and the alcayde de los Donzeles supped at the same table with the king, the queen, and the infanta. The royal family were served by the Marquis of Villena. The cupbearer to the king was his nephew, Fadrique de Toledo, son to the Duke of Alva. Don Alonzo de Estañiga had the honour of fulfilling that office for the queen, and Tello de Aguilar for the infanta. Other cavaliers of rank and distinction waited on the count and the alcayde de los Donzeles. At one o'clock, the two di-

stinguished guests were dismissed, with many courteous expressions, by the sovereigns*.

"Such," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "were the great honours, paid at our most exalted and ceremonious court, to these renowned cavaliers. But the gratitude of the sovereigns did not end here. A few days afterwards, they bestowed upon them large revenues for life, and others to descend to their heirs; with the privilege, for them and their descendants, to prefix the title of Don to their names. They gave them, moreover, as armorial bearings, a Moor's head crowned, with a golden chain round the neck, in a sanguine field, and twenty-two banners round the margin of the escutcheon. Their descendants, of the houses of Cabra and Cordova, continue to bear these arms at the present day, in memorial of the victory of Lucena, and the capture of Boabdil el Chico."

* The account given by Fray Antonio Agapida, of this ceremonial, so characteristic of the old Spanish court, agrees, in almost every particular, with an ancient manuscript, made up from the Chronicles of the curate of los Palacios, and other old Spanish writers.

CHAPTER XXV.

How the Marquis of Cadiz concerted to surprise Zahara, and the result of his enterprise.

THE valiant Roderigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz, was one of the most vigilant of commanders. He kept in his pay a number of converted Moors, to serve as adalides or armed guides. These mongrel Christians were of great service in procuring information. Availing themselves of their Moorish character and tongue, they penetrated into the enemies' country, prowled about the castles and fortresses, noticed the state of the walls, the gates, and towers; the strength of their garrisons, and the vigilance or negligence of their commanders. All this they reported minutely to the marquis; who thus knew the state of every fortress upon the frontier, and when it might be attacked with advantage. Besides the various towns and cities over which he held a feudal sway, he had always

an armed force about him, ready for the field. A host of retainers fed in his hall, who were ready to follow him to danger, and death itself, without inquiring who, or why, they fought. The armories of his castles were supplied with helms, and cuirasses, and weapons of all kinds, ready burnished for use; and his stables were filled with hardy steeds, that could stand a mountain scamper.

The marquis was aware, that the late defeat of the Moors, on the banks of the Lopera, had weakened their whole frontier; for many of the castles and fortresses had lost their alcaydes and their choicest troops. He sent out his war hounds, therefore, upon the range, to ascertain where a successful blow might be struck; and they soon returned with word, that Zahara was weakly garrisoned, and short of provisions.

This was the very fortress which, about two years before, had been stormed by Muley Aben Hassan; and its capture had been the first blow of this eventful war. It had ever since remained a thorn in the side of Andalusia. All the Christians had been carried away captive, and no civil population had been

introduced in their stead. There were no women or children in the place. It was kept up as a mere military post, commanding one of the most important passes of the mountains, and was a strong hold of Moorish marauders. The marquis was animated by the idea of regaining this fortress for his sovereigns, and wresting from the old Moorish king this boasted trophy of his prowess.

He sent missives, therefore, to the brave Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, who had distinguished himself in the late victory, and to Juan Almaraz, captain of the men at arms of the Holy Brotherhood, informing them of his designs, and inviting them to meet him with their forces on the banks of the Guadalete.

"It was on the day," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "of the glorious apostles St. Simon and Judas, the 28th of October, in the year of grace 1483, that this chosen band of Christian soldiers assembled, suddenly and secretly, at the appointed place. Their forces, when united, amounted to six hundred horse and fifteen hundred foot. Their gathering place was at the entrance of the defile leading to Zahara. That ancient town, renowned in

Moorish warfare, is situated in one of the roughest passes of the Serrania de Ronda. It is built round the craggy cone of a hill, on the lofty summit of which is a stong castle. The country around is broken into deep barrancas or ravines, some of which approach its very walls. The place had, until recently, been considered impregnable; but," as the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida observes, "the walls of impregnable fortresses, like the virtue of self-confident saints, have their weak points of attack."

The Marquis of Cadiz advanced with his little army in the dead of the night, marching silently up the deep and dark defiles of the mountains, and stealing up the ravines, which extended to the walls of the town. Their approach was so noiseless, that the Moorish sentinels upon the walls heard not a voice or a footfall. The marquis was accompanied by his old escalador, Ortega de Prado, who had distinguished himself at the scaling of Alhama. This hardy veteran was stationed, with ten men, furnished with scaling ladders, in a cavity among the rocks, close to the walls: at a little distance seventy men were hid in a

ravine, to be at hand to second him, when he should have fixed his ladders. The rest of the troops were concealed in another ravine, commanding a fair approach to the gate of the fortress. A shrewd and wary adalid, well acquainted with the place, was appointed to give signals; and was so stationed, that he could be seen by the various parties in ambush, but was hidden from the garrison.

The remainder of the night passed away in profound quiet. The Moorish sentinels could be heard tranquilly patrolling the walls, in perfect security. The day dawned, and the rising sun began to shine against the lofty peaks of the Serrania de Ronda. The sentinels looked, from their battlements, over a savage but quiet mountain country, where not a human being was stirring. They little dreamed of the mischief, that lay lurking in every ravine and chasm of the rocks around them. Apprehending no danger of surprise in broad day, the greater part of the soldiers abandoned the walls and towers, and descended into the city.

By orders of the marquis, a small body of light cavalry passed along the glen, and, turn-

ing round a point of rock, showed themselves before the town. They skirred the fields almost to the gates, as if by way of bravado, and to defy the garrison to a skirmish. The Moors were not slow in replying to it. About seventy horse, and a number of foot, who had guarded the walls, sallied forth impetuously, thinking to make easy prey of these insolent marauders. The Christian horsemen fled for the ravine; the Moors pursued them down the hill, until they heard a great shouting and tumult behind them. Looking round, they beheld their town assailed, and a scaling party mounting the walls, sword in hand. Wheeling about, they galloped furiously for the gate. The Marquis of Cadiz and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero rushed forth at the same time, with their ambuscade, and endeavoured to cut them off; but the Moors succeeded in throwing themselves within the walls.

While Puerto Carrero stormed at the gate, the marquis put spurs to his horse, and galloped to the support of Ortega de Prado and his scaling party. He arrived at a moment of imminent peril, when the party was assailed by fifty Moors, armed with cuirasses and

lances, who were on the point of thrusting them from the walls. The marquis sprang from his horse, mounted a ladder, sword in hand, followed by a number of his troops, and made a vigorous attack upon the enemy *. They were soon driven from the walls, and the gates and towers remained in possession of the Christians. The Moors defended themselves for a short time in the street; but at length took refuge in the castle, the walls of which were strong, and capable of holding out until relief should arrive. The marquis had no desire to carry on a siege, and he had not provisions sufficient for many prisoners: he granted them, therefore, favourable terms. They were permitted, on leaving their arms behind them, to march out, with as much of their effects as they could carry; and it was stipulated, that they should pass over to Barbary. The marquis remained in the place, until both town and castle were put in a perfect state of defence, and strongly garrisoned.

Thus did Zahara return once more into the possession of the Christians, to the great con-

* Cura de los Palacios, c. 68.

fusion of old Muley Aben Hassan; who, having paid the penalty of his ill timed violence, was now deprived of its vaunted fruits. The Castilian sovereigns were so gratified by this achievement of the valiant Ponce de Leon, that they authorized him, thenceforth, to entitle himself Duke of Cadiz and Marquis of Zahara. The warrior, however, was so proud of the original title, under which he had so often signalized himself, that he gave it the precedence, and always signed himself Marquis Duke of Cadiz. As the reader may have acquired the same predilection, we shall continue to call him by his ancient title.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of the fortress of Alhama; and how wisely it was governed by the Count de Tendilla.

In this part of his chronicle, the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida indulges in triumphant exultation over the downfal of Zahara. "Heaven sometimes speaks," says he, "through the mouths of false prophets, for the confusion of the wicked. By the fall of the fortress was the prediction of the santon of Granada in some measure fulfilled, that the ruins of Zahara should fall upon the heads of the infidels."

Our zealous chronicler scoffs at the Moorish alcayde, who lost his fortress by surprise, in broad daylight; and contrasts the vigilance of the Christian governor of Alhama, the town taken in retaliation for the storming of Zahara.

The important post of Alhama was at this time confided, by King Ferdinand, to Don Diego Lopez de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla; a cavalier of noble blood, brother to the grand

cardinal of Spain. He had been instructed by the king, not merely to maintain his post, but also to make sallies, and lay waste the surrounding country. His fortress was critically stationed. It was within seven leagues of Granada, and at no great distance from the warlike city of Loxa. It was nestled in the lap of the mountains, commanding the high road to Malaga, and a view over the extensive vega. Thus situate, in the heart of the enemy's country, surrounded by foes ready to assail him, and a rich country for him to ravage, it behoved this cavalier to be for ever on the alert. He was, in fact, an experienced veteran, a shrewd and wary officer, and a commander amazingly prompt and fertile in expedients.

On assuming the command, he found, that the garrison consisted but of one thousand men, horse and foot. They were hardy troops, seasoned in rough mountain campaigning; but reckless and dissolute, as soldiers are apt to be, when accustomed to predatory warfare. They would fight hard for booty, and then gamble it heedlessly away, or squander it in licentious revelling. Alhama abounded with

hawking, sharping, idle hangers on, eager to profit by the vices and follies of the garrison. The soldiers were oftener gambling and dancing beneath the walls, than keeping watch upon the battlements; and nothing was heard, from morning till night, but the noisy contest of cards and dice, mingled with the sound of the bolero or fandango, the drowsy strumming of the guitar, and the rattling of the castanets; while often the whole was interrupted by the loud brawl and fierce and bloody contest.

The Count of Tendilla set himself vigorously to reform these excesses. He knew, that laxity of morals is generally attended by neglect of duty; and that the least breach of discipline, in the exposed situation of his fortress, might be fatal. "Here is but a handful of men," said he: "it is necessary that each man should be a hero."

He endeavoured to awaken a proper ambition in the minds of his soldiers, and to instil into them the high principles of chivalry. "A just war," he observed, "is often rendered wicked and disastrous by the manner in which it is conducted: for the righteousness of the cause is not sufficient to sanction the profligacy

of the means; and the want of order and subordination among the troops may bring ruin and disgrace upon the best concerted plans." But we cannot describe the character and conduct of this renowned commander in more forcible language than that of Fray Antonio Agapida, excepting, that the pious father places, in the foreground of his virtues, his hatred of the Moors.

"The Count de Tendilla," says he, "was a mirror of Christian knighthood: watchful, abstemious, chaste, devout, and thoroughly filled with the spirit of the cause. He laboured incessantly and strenuously for the glory of the faith, and the prosperity of their most catholic majesties; and, above all, he hated the infidels with a pure and holy hatred. This worthy cavalier discountenanced all idleness, rioting, chambering, and wantonness, among his soldiers. He kept them constantly to the exercise of arms, making them adroit in the use of their weapons and management of their steeds, and prompt for the field, at a moment's notice. He permitted no sound of lute, or harp, or song, or other loose minstrelsy, to be heard in his fortress; debauching the ear

and softening the valour of the soldier: no other music was allowed but the wholesome rolling of the drums and braying of the trumpet, and such like spirit stirring instruments, as fill the mind with thoughts of iron war. All wandering minstrels, sharping pedlers, sturdy trulls, and other camp trumpery, were ordered to pack up their baggage, and were drummed out of the gates of Alhama. In place of such rabble, he introduced a train of holy friars, to inspirit his people by exhortation, and prayer, and choral chanting; and to spur them on to fight the good fight of faith. All games of chance were prohibited, except the game of war; and this he laboured, by vigilance and vigour, to reduce to a game of certainty. Heaven smiled upon the efforts of this righteous cavalier. His men became soldiers at all points, and terrors to the Moors. The good count never set forth on a ravage without observing the rites of confession, absolution, and communion, and obliging his followers to do the same. Their banners were blessed by the holy friars whom he maintained in Alhama; and, in this way, success was

secured to his arms; and he was enabled to lay waste the land of the heathen.

"The fortress of Alhama," continues Fray Antonio Agapida, "overlooked, from its lofty site, a great part of the fertile vega, watered by the Cazin and the Xenil. From this he made frequent sallies, sweeping away the flocks and herds from the pasture, the labourer from the field, and the convoy from the road; so that it was said by the Moors, that a beetle could not crawl across the vega without being seen by Count Tendilla. The peasantry, therefore, were fain to betake themselves to watchtowers and fortified hamlets, where they shut up their cattle, garnered their corn, and sheltered their wives and children. Even there they were not safe: the count would storm these rustic fortresses with fire and sword; make captives of their inhabitants; carry off the corn, the oil, the silks, and cattle; and leave the ruins blazing and smoking, within the very sight of Granada.

"It was a pleasing and refreshing sight," continues the good father, "to behold the pious knight and his followers returning from

one of these crusades, leaving the richland of the infidel in smoking desolation behind them. To behold the long line of mules and asses, laden with the plunder of the Gentiles, the hosts of captive Moors, men, women, and children; droves of sturdy beeves, lowing kine, and bleating sheep; all winding up the steep acclivity to the gates of Alhama, pricked on by the catholic soldiery. His garrison thus thrived on the fat of the land and the spoil of the infidel: nor was he unmindful of the pious fathers, whose blessings crowned his enterprises with success; a large portion of the spoil was always dedicated to the church, and the good friars were ever ready at the gates to hail him on his return, and receive the share allotted them. Besides these allotments, he made many votive offerings, either in time of peril or on the eve of a foray; and the chapels of Alhama were resplendent with chalices, crosses, and other precious gifts, made by this catholic cavalier."

Thus eloquently does the venerable Fray Antonio Agapida dilate in praise of the good Count de Tendilla; and other historians, of equal veracity but less unction, agree in pro-

nouncing him one of the ablest of Spanish generals. So terrible, in fact, did he become in the land, that the Moorish peasantry could not venture a league from Granada or Loxa, to labour in the fields, without peril of being carried into captivity. The people of Granada clamoured against Muley Aben Hassan for suffering his lands to be thus outraged and insulted, and demanded to have this bold marauder shut up in his fortress. The old monarch was roused by their remonstrances. He sent forth powerful troops of horse to protect the country during the season that the husbandmen were abroad in the fields. These troops patrolled, in formidable squadrons, in the neighbourhood of Alhama, keeping strict watch upon its gates, so that it was impossible for the Christians to make a sally, without being seen and interrupted.

While Alhama was thus blockaded by a roving force of Moorish cavalry, the inhabitants were awakened, one night, by a tremendous crash, that shook the fortress to its foundations. The garrison flew to arms, supposing it some assault of the enemy. The alarm proved to have been caused by the rupture of a portion

of the wall, which, undermined by heavy rains, had suddenly given way, leaving a large chasm yawning towards the plain.

The Count de Tendilla was for a time in great anxiety. Should this breach be discovered by the blockading horsemen, they would arouse the country. Granada and Loxa would pour out an overwhelming force, and they would find his walls ready sapped for an assault. In this fearful emergency, the count displayed his noted talent for expedients. He ordered a quantity of linen cloth to be stretched in front of the breach, painted in imitation of stone, and indented with battlements, so as, at a distance, to resemble the other parts of the walls. Behind this skreen, he employed workmen, day and night, in repairing the fracture. No one was permitted to leave the fortress, lest information of its defenceless plight should be carried to the Moors. Light squadrons of the enemy were seen hovering about the plain, but none approached near enough to discover the deception; and thus, in the course of a few days, the wall was rebuilt stronger than before.

There was another expedient of this shrewd

veteran, which greatly excites the marvel of Agapida. "It happened," he observes, "that this catholic cavalier at one time was destitute of gold and silver, wherewith to pay the wages of his troops; and the soldiers murmured greatly, seeing that they had not the means of purchasing necessaries from the people of the town. In this dilemma, what does this most sagacious commander? He takes him a number of little morsels of paper, on which he inscribes various sums, large and small, according to the nature of the case, and signs them with his own hand and name. These did he give to the soldiery, in earnest of their pay. How! you will say, are soldiers to be paid with scraps of paper? Even so, I answer, and well paid too, as I will presently make manifest: for the good count issued a proclamation, ordering the inhabitants of Alhama to take these morsels of paper for the full amount thereon inscribed, promising to redeem them, at a future time, with silver and gold, and threatening severe punishment to all who should refuse. The people, having full confidence in his words, and trusting, that he would be as willing to perform the one pro-

mise, as he certainly was able to perform the other, took these curious morsels of paper without hesitation or demur.

"Thus, by a subtle and most miraculous kind of alchymy, did this catholic cavalier turn worthless paper into precious gold, and make his late impoverished garrison abound in money."

It is but just to add, that the Count de Tendilla redeemed his promises like a loyal knight; and this miracle, as it appeared in the eyes of Fray Antonio Agapida, is the first instance on record of paper money, which has since inundated the civilized world with unbounded opulence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Foray of Christian knights into the territories of the Moors.

The Spanish cavaliers, who had survived the memorable massacre among the mountains of Malaga, although they had repeatedly avenged the death of their companions, yet could not forget the horror and humiliation of their defeat. Nothing would satisfy them but to undertake a second expedition of the kind, to carry fire and sword throughout a wide part of the Moorish territories, and to leave all those regions, which had triumphed in their disaster, a black and burning monument of their vengeance. Their wishes accorded with the policy of the king, who desired to lay waste the country, and destroy the resources, of the enemy; every assistance was therefore given, to promote and accomplish their enterprise.

In the spring of 1484, the ancient city of

Antequera again resounded with arms. Numbers of the same cavaliers, who had assembled there so gayly the preceding year, again came wheeling into the gates, with their steeled and shining warriors, but with a more dark and solemn brow than on that disastrous occasion; for they had the recollection of their slaughtered friends present to their minds, whose deaths they were to avenge.

In a little while there was a chosen force of six thousand horse and twelve thousand foot assembled in Antequera, many of them the very flower of Spanish chivalry, troops of the established military and religious orders, and of the Holy Brotherhood.

Every precaution had been taken to provide this army with all things needful for its extensive and perilous inroad. Numerous surgeons accompanied it, who were to attend upon all the sick and wounded, without charge, being paid for their services by the queen. Isabella also, in her considerate humanity, provided six spacious tents, furnished with beds, and all things requisite for the wounded and infirm. These continued to be used in all great expeditions throughout the war, and were called

the Queen's Hospital. The worthy father, Fray Antonio Agapida, vaunts this benignant provision of the queen, as the first introduction of a regular camp hospital in campaigning service.

Thus thoroughly prepared, the cavaliers issued forth from Antequera in splendid and terrible array, but with less exulting confidence and vaunting ostentation than on their former foray: and this was the order of the army.

Don Alonzo de Aguilar led the advance guard, accompanied by Don Diego Fernandez de Cordova, alcayde de los Donzeles, and Luiz Fernandez Puerto Carrero, Count of Palma, with their household troops. They were followed by Juan de Merlo, Juan de Almara, and Carlos de Biezman, of the Holy Brotherhood, with the men at arms of their captaincies.

The second battalion was commanded by the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, with the cavaliers of Santiago, and the troops of the house of Ponce Leon: with these also went the senior commander of Calatrava, and the knights of that order, and various other cavaliers and their retainers.

The right wing of this second battalion was led by Gonsalvo de Cordova, afterwards renowned as grand captain of Spain: the left wing, by Diego Lopez de Avila. They were accompanied by several cavaliers, and certain captains of the Holy Brotherhood, with their men at arms.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia and the Count de Cabra commanded the third battalion, with the troops of their respective houses. They were accompanied by other commanders of note, with their forces.

The rearguard was brought up by the senior commander and knights of Alcantara, followed by the Andalusian chivalry, from Xerez, Ecija, and Carmona.

Such was the army that issued forth from the gates of Antequera, on one of the most extensive *talas*, or devastating inroads, that ever laid waste the kingdom of Granada.

The army entered the Moorish territory by the way of Alora, destroying all the corn fields, vineyards and orchards, and plantations of olives, round that city. It then proceeded through the rich valleys and fertile uplands of Coin, Cazaraboncla, Almexia, and Cartama,

and, in ten days, all those fertile regions were a smoking and frightful desert. From hence it pursued its slow and destructive course, like the stream of lava of a volcano, through the regions of Pupiana and Alhendin, and so on to the vega of Malaga, laying waste the groves of olives and almonds, and the fields of grain, and destroying every green thing. The Moors of some of those places interceded in vain for their groves and fields, offering to deliver up their Christian captives. One part of the army blockaded the towns, while the other ravaged the surrounding country. Sometimes the Moors sallied forth desperately to defend their property, but were driven back to their gates with slaughter; and their suburbs pillaged and burnt. It was an awful spectacle at night, to behold the volumes of black smoke, mingled with lurid flames, that rose from the burning suburbs, and the women on the walls of the town, wringing their hands, and shrieking at the desolation of their dwellings.

The destroying army, on arriving at the sea coast, found vessels lying off shore, laden with all kinds of provisions and munitions for its

use, which had been sent from Seville and Xerez. It was thus enabled to continue its desolating career. Advancing to the neighbourhood of Malaga, it was bravely assailed by the Moors of that city, and there was severe skirmishing for a whole day; but while the main part of the army encountered the enemy, the rest ravaged the whole vega, and destroyed all the mills. As the object of the expedition was not to capture places, but merely to burn, ravage, and destroy, the host, satisfied with the mischief they had done in the vega, turned their backs upon Malaga, and again entered the mountains. They passed by Coin, and through the regions of Allagagna, and Gatero, and Alhamin; all which were likewise desolated. In this way did they make the circuit of that chain of rich and verdant valleys, the glory of those mountains, and the pride and delight of the Moors. For forty days did they continue on, like a consuming fire, leaving a smoking and howling waste to mark their course, until, weary with the work of destruction, and having fully sated their revenge for the massacre of the Axarquia, they returned in triumph to the meadows of Antequera.

In the month of June, King Ferdinand took command in person of this destructive army. He increased its force; and he added to its means of mischief several lombards, and other heavy artillery, intended for the battering of towns, and managed by engineers from France and Germany. With these, the Marquis of Cadiz assured the king, he would soon be able to reduce the Moorish fortresses. They were only calculated for defence against the engines anciently used in warfare. Their walls and towers were high and thin, depending on their rough and rocky situations. The stone and iron balls, thundered from the lombards, would soon tumble them in ruins upon the heads of their defenders.

The fate of Alora speedily proved the truth of this opinion. It was strongly posted on a rock, washed by a river. The artillery soon battered down two of the towers, and a part of the wall. The Moors were thrown into consternation at the vehemence of the assault, and the effect of those tremendous engines upon their vaunted bulwarks. The roaring of the artillery, and the tumbling of the walls, terrified the women; who beset the alcayde

with vociferous supplications to surrender. The place was given up on the 20th of June, on condition that the inhabitants might depart with their effects. The people of Malaga, as yet unacquainted with the power of this battering ordnance, were so incensed at those of Alora, for what they considered a tame surrender, that they would not admit them into their city.

A similar fate attended the town of Setenil, built on a lofty rock, and esteemed impregnable. Many times had it been besieged, under former Christian kings, but never had it been taken. Even now, for several days, the artillery was directed against it without effect; and many of the cavaliers murmured at the Marquis of Cadiz, for having counselled the king to attack this unconquerable place*.

On the same night that these reproaches were uttered, the marquis directed the artillery himself. He levelled the lombards at the bottom of the walls, and at the gates. In a little while, the gates were battered to pieces; a great breach was effected in the walls; and

* Cura de los Palacios.

the Moors were fain to capitulate. Twenty-four Christian captives, who had been taken in the defeat of the mountains of Malaga, were rescued from the dungeons of this fortress, and hailed the Marquis of Cadiz as their deliverer.

Needless is it to mention the capture of various other places, which surrendered without waiting to be attacked. The Moors had always shown great bravery and perseverance in defending their towns; they were formidable in their sallies and skirmishes, and patient in enduring hunger and thirst when besieged: but this terrible ordnance, which demolished their walls with such ease and rapidity, overwhelmed them with confusion and dismay, and rendered vain all resistance. King Ferdinand was so struck with the effect of this artillery, that he ordered the number of lombards to be increased; and these potent engines had henceforth a great influence on the fortunes of the war.

The last operation of this year, so disastrous to the Moors, was an inroad by King Ferdinand, in the latter part of summer, into the vega; in which he ravaged the country, burned

two villages near to Granada, and destroyed the mills close to the very gates of the city.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was overwhelmed with dismay at this desolation; which, during the whole year, had been raging throughout his territories, and had now reached to the walls of his capital. His fierce spirit was broken by misfortunes and infirmity: he offered to purchase a peace, and to hold his crown as a tributary vassal. Ferdinand would listen to no propositions; the absolute conquest of Granada was the great object of the war; and he was resolved never to rest content without its complete fulfilment. Having supplied and strengthened the garrisons of the places he had taken in the heart of the Moorish territories, he enjoined their commanders to render every assistance to the younger Moorish king, in the civil war against his father. He then returned with his army to Cordova, in great triumph; closing a series of ravaging campaigns, that had filled the kingdom of Granada with grief and consternation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Attempt of El Zagal to surprise Boabdil in Almeria.

During this year of sorrow and disaster to the Moors, the younger king Boabdil, most truly called the unfortunate, held a diminished and feeble court in the maritime city of Almeria. He retained little more than the name of king; and was supported, in even the shadow of royalty, by the countenance and treasures of the Castilian sovereigns. Still he trusted, that, in the fluctuation of events, the inconstant nation might once more return to his standard, and replace him on the throne of the Alhambra.

His mother, the high spirited sultana Ayxa la Horra, endeavoured to rouse him from this passive state. "It is a feeble mind," said she, "that waits for the turn of fortune's wheel; the brave mind seizes upon it, and turns it to its purpose. Take the field, and you may drive

danger before you; remain cowering at home, and it besieges you in your dwelling. By a bold enterprise, you may regain your splendid throne in Granada; by passive forbearance, you will forfeit even this miserable throne in Almeria."

Boabdil had not the force of soul to follow these courageous counsels; and, in a little time, the evils his mother had predicted fell upon him.

Old Muley Aben Hassan was almost extinguished by age and infirmity. He had nearly lost his sight, and was completely bedridden. His brother Abdalla, surnamed El Zagal, or "the valiant," the same who had assisted in the massacre of the Spanish chivalry among the mountains of Malaga, was commander in chief of the Moorish armies; and gradually took upon himself most of the cares of sovereignty. Among other things, he was particularly zealous in espousing his brother's quarrel with his son; and he prosecuted it with such vehemence, that many affirmed there was something more than fraternal sympathy at the bottom of his zeal.

The disasters and disgraces inflicted on the

country by the Christians, during this year, had wounded the national feelings of the people of Almeria; and many had felt indignant, that Boabdil should remain passive at such a time; or rather, should appear to make a common cause with the enemy. His uncle Abdalla diligently fomented this feeling by his agents. The same arts were made use of that had been successful in Granada. Boabdil was secretly, but actively, denounced by the alfaquis as an apostate, leagued with the Christians against his country and his early faith. The affections of the populace and soldiery were gradually alienated from him, and a deep conspiracy concerted for his destruction. In the month of February, 1485, El Zagal suddenly appeared before Almeria, at the head of a troop of horse. The alfaquis were prepared for his arrival, and the gates were thrown open to him. He entered, with his band, and galloped to the citadel. The alcayde would have made resistance; but the garrison put him to death, and received El Zagal with acclamations. El Zagal rushed through the apartments of the alcazar, but he sought in vain for Boabdil. He found the sultana Ayxa la Horra in one of the saloons,

with Ben Ahagete, a younger brother of the monarch, a valiant Abencerrage, and several attendants, who rallied round them to protect them. "Where is the traitor Boabdil?" exclaimed El Zagal. "I know no traitor more perfidious than thyself," exclaimed the intrepid sultana: "and I trust my son is in safety, to take vengeance on thy treason." The rage of El Zagal was without bounds, when he learned that his intended victim had escaped. In his fury he slew the prince, Ben Ahagete; and his followers fell upon and massacred the Abencerrage and attendants. As to the proud sultana, she was borne away prisoner, and loaded with revilings; as having upheld her son in his rebellion, and fomented a civil war.

The unfortunate Boabdil had been apprized of his danger by a faithful soldier, just in time to make his escape. Throwing himself on one of the fleetest horses of his stables, and followed by a handful of adherents, he had galloped, in the confusion, out of the gates of Almeria. Several of the cavalry of El Zagal, who were stationed without the wall, perceived his flight, and attempted to pursue him. Their

horses were jaded with travel, and he soon left them far behind. But whither was he to fly? Every fortress and castle in the kingdom was closed against him. He knew not whom among the Moors to trust; for they had been taught to detest him, as a traitor and an apostate. He had no alternative but to seek refuge among the Christians, his hereditary enemies. With a heavy heart, he turned his horse's head towards Cordova. He had to lurk, like a fugitive, through a part of his own dominions; nor did he feel himself secure until he had passed the frontier, and beheld the mountain barrier of his country towering behind him. Then it was that he became conscious of his humiliating state: a fugitive from his throne; an outcast from his nation; a king without a kingdom. He smote his breast in an agony of grief. "Evil indeed," exclaimed he, "was the day of my birth; and truly was I named El Zogoybi, the unlucky!"

He entered the gates of Cordova with downcast countenance, and with a train of only forty followers. The sovereigns were absent; but the cavaliers of Andalusia manifested that sympathy in the misfortunes of the monarch,

that becomes men of lofty and chivalrous souls. They received him with great distinction, attended him with the utmost courtesy; and he was honourably entertained by the civil and military commanders of that ancient city.

In the mean time, El Zagal put a new alcayde over Almeria, to govern in the name of his brother; and, having strongly garrisoned the place, he repaired to Malaga, where an attack of the Christians was apprehended. The young monarch being driven out of the land, and the old monarch blind and bedridden, El Zagal, at the head of the armies, was virtually the sovereign of Granada. The people were pleased with having a new idol to look up to, and a new name to shout forth; and El Zagal was hailed with acclamations, as the main hope of the nation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How King Ferdinand commenced another campaign against the Moors, and how he laid siege to Coin and Cartama.

THE great effect of the battering ordnance, in demolishing the Moorish fortresses, in the preceding year, induced King Ferdinand to procure a powerful train for the campaign of 1485; in the course of which he resolved to assault some of the most formidable holds of the enemy. An army of nine thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry assembled at Cordova early in the spring; and the king took the field on the 5th of April. It had been determined in secret council, to attack the city of Malaga, that ancient and important seaport, on which Granada depended for foreign aid and supplies. It was thought proper previously, however, to get possession of various towns and fortresses in the valleys of Santa Maria and Cartama, through which pass the roads to Malaga.

The first place assailed was the town of Benamaquex. It had submitted to the catholic sovereigns in the preceding year, but had since renounced its allegiance. King Ferdinand was enraged at the rebellion of the inhabitants. "I will make their punishment," said he, "a terror to others: they shall be loyal through force, if not through faith." The place was carried by storm; one hundred and eight of the principal inhabitants were either put to the sword or hanged on the battlements. The rest were carried into captivity*.

The towns of Coin and Cartama were besieged on the same day; the first by a division of the army led on by the Marquis of Cadiz; the second by another division, commanded by Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and Luis Fernandez Puerto Carrero, the brave senior of Palma. The king, with the rest of the army, remained posted between the two places, to render assistance to either division. The batteries opened upon both places at the same time; and the thunder of the lombards was mutually heard from one camp to the other.

* Pulgar. Garibay. Cura de los Palacios.

The Moors made frequent sallies, and a valiant defence; but they were confounded by the tremendous uproar of the batteries, and the destruction of their walls. In the mean time, the alarm fires gathered together the Moorish mountaineers of the Serrania, who assembled in great numbers in the city of Monda, about a league from Coin.

They made several attempts to enter the besieged town, but in vain; they were each time intercepted and driven back by the Christians, and were reduced to gaze at a distance, in despair, on the destruction of the place. While thus situated, there rode one day into Monda a fierce and haughty Moorish chieftain, at the head of a band of swarthy African horsemen: it was Hamet el Zegri, the fiery spirited alcayde of Ronda, at the head of his band of Gomeres. He had not yet recovered from the rage and mortification of his defeat on the banks of the Lopera, in the disastrous foray of Old Bexir, when he had been obliged to steal back to his mountains, with the loss of his bravest followers. He had ever since panted for revenge. He now rode among the host of war-

riors assembled at Monda. "Who among you," cried he, "feels pity for the women and children of Coin, exposed to captivity and death? Whoever he is, let him follow me, who am ready to die as a Moslem for the relief of Moslems!" So saying, he seized a white banner, and, waving it over his head, rode forth from the town, followed by the Gomeres. Many of the warriors, roused by his words and his example, spurred resolutely after his banner. The people of Coin, being prepared for this attempt, sallied forth as they saw the white banner, and made an attack upon the Christian camp; and, in the confusion of the moment, Hamet and his followers galloped into the gates. This reinforcement animated the besieged, and Hamet exhorted them to hold out obstinately in defence of life and the town. As the Gomeres were veteran warriors, the more they were attacked, the harder they fought.

At length, a great breach was made in the walls; and Ferdinand, who was impatient of the resistance of the place, ordered the Duke of Naxera and the Count of Benavente to enter with their troops; and, as their forces

were not sufficient, he sent word to Luis de Cerda, Duke of Medina Celi, to send a part of his people to their assistance.

The feudal pride of the duke was roused at this demand. "Tell my lord the king," said the haughty grandee, "that I have come to succour him with my household troops. If my people are ordered to any place, I am to go with them; but, if I am to remain in the camp, they must remain with me: for troops cannot serve without their commander, nor their commander without his troops."

The reply of the high-spirited grandee perplexed the cautious Ferdinand, who knew the jealous pride of his powerful nobles. In the mean time, the people of the camp, having made all preparations for the assault, were impatient to be led forward. Upon this Pero Ruyz de Alarcon put himself at their head, and, seizing their mantas, or portable bulwarks, and their other defences, they made a gallant assault, and fought their way in at the breach. The Moors were so overcome by the fury of their assault, that they retreated fighting to the square of the town. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon thought the place was car-

ried, when suddenly Hamet and his Gomeres came scouring through the streets, with wild war cries, and fell furiously upon the Christians. The latter were, in their turn, beaten back; and, while attacked in front by the Gomeres, were assailed by the inhabitants with all kinds of missiles, from their roofs and windows. They at length gave way, and retreated through the breach. Pero Ruyz de Alarcon still maintained his ground in one of the principal streets. The few cavaliers that stood by him urged him to fly! "No," said he, "I came here to fight, and not to fly!" He was presently surrounded by the Gomeres. His companions fled for their lives. Before they fled, they saw him covered with wounds, but still fighting desperately for the fame of a good cavalier *.

The resistance of the inhabitants, though aided by the valour of the Gomeres, was of no avail. The battering artillery of the Christians demolished their walls; combustibles were thrown into their town, which set it on fire in various places, and they were at length compelled to capitulate. They were permitted

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 42.

to depart with their effects, and the Gomeres with their arms. Hamet el Zegri and his African band sallied forth, and rode proudly through the Christian camp; nor could the Spanish cavaliers refrain from regarding with admiration that haughty warrior and his devoted and dauntless adherents.

The capture of Coin was accompanied by that of Cartama. The fortifications of the latter were repaired and garrisoned; but Coin being too extensive to be defended by a moderate force, its walls were demolished. The siege of these places struck such terror into the surrounding country, that the Moors of many of the neighbouring towns abandoned their homes, and fled, with such of their effects as they could carry away: upon which the king gave orders to demolish their walls and towers.

King Ferdinand now left his camp and his heavy artillery near Cartama, and proceeded with his lighter troops to reconnoitre Malaga. By this time the secret plan of attack, arranged in the council of war at Cordova, was known to all the world. The vigilant warrior, El Zagal, had thrown himself into the

place. He had put all the fortifications, which were of vast strength, into a state of defence, and had sent orders to the alcaydes of the mountain towns to hasten with their forces to his assistance.

The very day that Ferdinand appeared before the place, El Zagal sallied forth to receive him at the head of a thousand cavalry, the choicest warriors of Granada. A hot skirmish took place among the gardens and olive trees near the city. Many were killed on both sides, and this gave the Christians a sharp foretaste of what they might expect, if they attempted to besiege the place.

When the skirmish was over, the Marquis of Cadiz had a private conference with the king. He represented the difficulty of besieging Malaga with their present force, especially as their plans had been discovered and anticipated, and the whole country was marching over the mountains to oppose them. The marquis, who had secret intelligence from all quarters, had received a letter from Juceph Xerife, a Moor of Ronda, of Christian lineage, apprizing him of the situation of that important place and its garrison, which at that

moment laid it open to attack; and the marquis was urgent with the king to seize upon this critical moment, and secure a place, which was one of the most powerful Moorish fortresses on the frontiers, and, in the hands of Hamet el Zegri, had been the scourge of Andalusía. The good marquis had another motive for his advice, becoming a true and loyal knight. In the deep dungeons of Ronda languished several of his companions in arms, who had been captured in the defeat in the Axarquia. To break their chains, and restore them to liberty and light, he felt to be his peculiar duty, as one of those who had most promoted that disastrous enterprise.

King Ferdinand listened to the advice of the marquis. He knew the importance of Ronda, which was considered one of the keys of the kingdom of Granada; and he was disposed to punish the inhabitants, for the aid they had rendered to the garrison at Coin. The siege of Malaga, therefore, was abandoned for the present, and preparations made for a rapid and secret move against the city of Ronda.

CHAPTER XXX.

Siege of Ronda.

THE bold Hamet el Zegri, the alcayde of Ronda, had returned sullenly to his strong hold after the surrender of Coin. He had fleshed his sword in battle with the Christians; but his thirst for vengeance was still unsatisfied. Hamet gloried in the strength of his fortress and the valour of his people. A fierce and warlike populace was at his command; his signal fires would summon all the warriors of the Serrania; his Gomeres almost subsisted on the spoils of Andalusia; and in the rock on which his fortress was built were hopeless dungeons, filled with Christian captives, who had been carried off by these war hawks of the mountains.

Ronda was considered as impregnable. It was situate in the heart of wild and rugged mountains, and perched upon an isolated rock,

crested by a strong citadel, with triple walls and towers. A deep ravine, or rather a perpendicular chasm of rocks, of frightful depth, surrounded three parts of the city; through this flowed the Rio Verde, or Green River. There were two suburbs to the city, fortified by walls and towers, and almost inaccessible, from the natural asperity of the rocks. Around this rugged city were deep rich valleys, sheltered by the mountains, refreshed by constant streams, abounding with grain, and the most delicious fruits, and yielding verdant meadows; in which was reared a renowned breed of horses, the best in the whole kingdom for a foray.

Hamet el Zegri had scarcely returned to Ronda, when he received intelligence, that the Christian army was marching to the siege of Malaga, and orders from El Zagal to send troops to his assistance. Hamet sent a part of his garrison for that purpose. In the mean time, he meditated an expedition to which he was stimulated by pride and revenge. All Andalusia was now drained of its troops: there was an opportunity, therefore, for an inroad, by which he might wipe out the disgrace of his defeat at the battle of Lopera. Appre-

hending no danger to his mountain city, now that the storm of war had passed down into the vega of Malaga, he left but a remnant of his garrison to man its walls; and, putting himself at the head of his band of Gomeres, swept down suddenly into the plains of Andalusia. He careered, almost without resistance, over those vast campiñas, or pasture lands, which form a part of the domains of the Duke of Medina Sidonia. In vain the bells were rung, and the alarm fires kindled; the band of Hamet had passed by before any force could be assembled; and was only to be traced, like a hurricane, by the devastation it had made.

Hamet regained in safety the Serrania de Ronda, exulting in his successful inroad. The mountain glens were filled with long droves of cattle, and flocks of sheep, from the campiñas of Medina Sidonia. There were mules, too, laden with the plunder of the villages; and every warrior had some costly spoil of jewels for his favourite mistress.

As El Zegri drew near to Ronda, he was roused from his dream of triumph by the sound of heavy ordnance, bellowing through the mountain defiles. His heart misgave him:

he put spurs to his horse, and galloped in advance of his lagging cavalgada. As he proceeded, the noise of the ordnance increased, echoing from cliff to cliff. Spurring his horse up a craggy height, which commanded an extensive view, he beheld, to his consternation, the country about Ronda white with the tents of a besieging army. The royal standard, displayed before a proud encampment, showed that Ferdinand himself was present, while the incessant blaze and thunder of artillery, and the volumes of overhanging smoke, told the work of destruction that was going on.

The royal army had succeeded in coming upon Ronda by surprise, during the absence of its alcayde, and most of its garrison; but its inhabitants were warlike, and defended themselves bravely, trusting that Hamet and his Gomeres would soon return to their assistance.

The fancied strength of their bulwarks had been of little avail against the batteries of the besiegers. In the space of four days, three towers, and great masses of the walls which defended the suburbs, were battered down, and the suburbs taken and plundered. Lom-

bards and other heavy ordnance were now levelled at the walls of the city, and stones and missiles of all kinds hurled into the streets. The very rock on which the city stood shook with the thunder of the artillery; and the Christian captives, deep within its dungeons, hailed the sound as the promise of deliverance.

When Hamet el Zegri beheld his city thus surrounded and assailed, he called upon his men to follow him, and make a desperate attempt to cut their way through to its relief. They proceeded stealthily through the mountains, until they came to the nearest heights above the Christian camp. When night fell, and part of the army was sunk in sleep, they descended the rocks, and rushing suddenly upon the weakest part of the camp, endeavoured to break their way through, and gain the city. The camp was too strong to be forced; they were driven back to the crags of the mountains, whence they defended themselves by showering down darts and stones upon their pursuers.

Hamet now lighted alarm fires about the heights; his standard was joined by the neigh-

bouring mountaineers, and by troops from Malaga. Thus reinforced, he made repeated assaults upon the Christians, cutting off all stragglers from the camp. All his attempts, however, to force his way into the city were fruitless. Many of his bravest men were slain, and he was obliged to retreat into the fastnesses of the mountains.

In the mean while, the distress of Ronda was hourly increasing. The Marquis of Cadiz, having possession of the suburbs, was enabled to approach to the very foot of the perpendicular precipice, rising from the river, on the summit of which the city is built. At the foot of this rock is a living fountain of limpid water, gushing into a great natural basin. A secret mine led down from within the city to this fountain, by several hundred steps, cut in the solid rock. From this the city obtained its chief supply of water; and the steps were deeply worn by the weary feet of Christian captives employed in the painful labour. The Marquis of Cadiz discovered this subterranean passage, and directed his pioneers to countermine it through the solid body of the rock.

They pierced to the shaft; and, stopping it up, deprived the city of the benefit of this precious fountain.

While the brave Marquis of Cadiz was thus pressing the siege with zeal, and glowing with the generous thoughts of soon delivering his companions in arms from the Moorish dungeons, far other were the feelings of the alcayde, Hamet el Zegri. He smote his breast, and gnashed his teeth, in impotent fury, as he beheld, from the mountain cliffs, the destruction of the city. Every thunder of the Christian ordnance seemed to batter against his heart. He saw tower after tower tumbling by day, and at night the city blazed like a volcano. "They fired not merely stones from their ordnance," says a chronicler of the times, "but likewise great balls of iron, cast in moulds, which demolished every thing they struck." They threw also balls of tow, steeped in pitch and oil and gunpowder, which, when once on fire, were not to be extinguished, and which set the houses in flames.

Great was the horror of the inhabitants. They knew not where to flee for refuge: their houses were in a blaze, or shattered by the

ordnance. The streets were perilous, from the falling ruins and the bounding balls, which dashed to pieces every thing they encountered. At night the city looked like a fiery furnace: the cries and wailings of the women were heard between the thunders of the ordnance, and reached even to the Moors on the opposite mountains, who answered them by yells of fury and despair.

All hope of external succour being at an end, the inhabitants of Ronda were compelled to capitulate. Ferdinand was easily prevailed upon to grant them favourable terms. The place was capable of longer resistance; and he feared for the safety of his camp, as the forces were daily augmenting on the mountains, and making frequent assaults. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with their effects, either to Barbary or elsewhere; and those who chose to reside in Spain had lands assigned them, and were indulged in the exercise of their religion.

No sooner did the place surrender, than detachments were sent to attack the Moors, who hovered about the neighbouring mountains. Hamet el Zegri, however, did not remain, to

try a fruitless battle. He gave up the game as lost, and retreated with his Gomeres, filled with grief and rage, but trusting to fortune to give him future vengeance.

The first care of the good Marquis of Cadiz, on entering Ronda, was to deliver his unfortunate companions in arms from the dungeons of the fortress. What a difference in their looks, from the time, when, flushed with health and hope, and arrayed in military pomp, they had sallied forth upon the mountain foray. Many of them were almost naked, with irons at their ankles, and beards reaching to their waists. Their meeting with the marquis was joyful, yet it had the look of grief; for their joy was mingled with many bitter recollections. There was an immense number of other captives, among whom were several young men of noble families, who, with filial piety, had surrendered themselves prisoners in place of their fathers.

The captives were all provided with mules, and sent to the queen at Cordova. The humane heart of Isabella melted at the sight of the piteous cavalcade. They were all sup-

plied by her with food and raiment, and money to pay their expenses to their homes. Their chains were hung as pious trophies against the exterior of the church of St. Juan de los Reyes in Toledo, where the Christian traveller may regale his eyes with the sight of them at this very day.

Among the Moorish captives was a young infidel maiden of great beauty, who desired to become a Christian, and to remain in Spain. She had been inspired with the light of the true faith, through the ministry of a young man, who had been a captive in Ronda. He was anxious to complete his good work by marrying her. The queen consented to their pious wishes, having first taken care, that the young maiden should be properly purified by the holy sacrament of baptism.

"Thus this pestilent nest of warfare and infidelity, the city of Ronda," says the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "was converted to the true faith by the thunder of our artillery. An example which was soon followed by Casanbonelas, Alarbella, and other towns in these parts; insomuch that, in the course

of this expedition, no less than seventy-two places were rescued from the vile sect of Mahomet, and placed under the benignant domination of the cross."

CHAPTER XXXI.

How the people of Granada invited El Zagal to the throne; and how he marched to the capital.

THE people of Granada were a versatile, unsteady race, and exceedingly given to make and unmake kings. They had, for a long time, vacillated between old Muley Aben Hassan and his son, Boabdil el Chico; sometimes setting up the one, sometimes the other, and sometimes both at once, according to the pinch and pressure of external evils. They found, however, that the evils still went on increasing, in defiance of every change; and were at their wits' end to devise some new combination or arrangement, by which an efficient government might be wrought out of two bad kings.

When the tidings arrived of the fall of Ronda, and the consequent ruin of the frontier, a tumultuous assemblage took place in one of the public squares. As usual, the

people attributed the misfortunes of the country exclusively to the faults of their rulers: for the populace never imagine, that any part of their miseries can originate with themselves. A crafty alfaqui, named Alyme Mazer, who had watched the current of their discontents, rose, and harangued them.

"You have been choosing and changing," said he, "between two monarchs; and who and what are they? Muley Aben Hassan for one; a man worn out by age and infirmities; unable to sally forth against the foe, even when ravaging to the very gates of the city: and Boabdil el Chico for the other; an apostate, a traitor, a deserter from his throne, a fugitive among the enemies of his nation; a man fated to misfortune, and proverbially named 'the unlucky.'

"In a time of overwhelming war, like the present, he only is fit to sway a sceptre, who can wield a sword. Would you seek such a man? You need not look far. Allah has sent such a one, in this time of distress, to retrieve the fortunes of Granada. You already know whom I mean. You know it can be no other than your general, the invincible Abdalla;

whose surname of El Zagal has become a watchword in battle, rousing the courage of the faithful, and striking terror into the unbelievers."

The multitude received the words of the alfaqui with acclamations; they were delighted with the idea of a third king over Granada; and Abdalla el Zagal, being of the royal family, and already in the virtual exercise of royal power, the measure had nothing in it that appeared either rash or violent. A deputation was therefore sent to El Zagal at Malaga, inviting him to repair to Granada, to receive the crown.

El Zagal expressed great surprise and repugnance, when the mission was announced to him; and nothing but his patriotic zeal for the public safety, and his fraternal eagerness to relieve the aged Aben Hassan from the cares of government, prevailed upon him to accept the offer of the crown. Leaving, therefore, Rodovan de Vanegas, one of the bravest Moorish generals, in command of Malaga, he departed for Granada, attended by three hundred trusty cavaliers.

Old Muley Aben Hassan did not wait for

the arrival of his brother. Unable any longer to buffet with the storms of the times, his only solicitude was to seek some safe and quiet harbour of repose. In one of the deep valleys which indent the Mediterranean coast, and which are shut up, on the land side, by stupendous mountains, stood the little city of Almunecar. The valley was watered by the river Frio, and abounded with fruits, with grain, and with pasturage. The city was strongly fortified; and the garrison and alcayde were devoted to the old monarch. This was the place chosen by Muley Aben Hassan for his asylum. His first care was to send thither all his treasures; his next, to take refuge there himself; his third, that his sultana Zorayna, and their two sons, should follow him.

In the mean time, Muley Abdalla el Zagal pursued his journey towards the capital, attended by his three hundred cavaliers. The road from Malaga to Granada winds close by Alhama, and is commanded by that fortress. This had been a most perilous pass for the Moors during the time that Alhama was commanded by the Count de Tendilla. Not a traveller could escape his eagle eye; and his gar-

rison was ever ready for a sally. The Count de Tendilla, however, had been relieved from this arduous post; and it had been given in charge to Don Gutiere de Padilla, claverd or treasurer of the order of Calatrava; an easy, indulgent man, who had with him three hundred gallant knights of his order, beside other mercenary troops. The garrison had fallen off in discipline; the cavaliers were hardy in fight and daring in foray, but confident in themselves, and negligent of proper precautions. Just before the journey of El Zagal, a number of these cavaliers, with several soldiers of fortune of the garrison, in all one hundred and seventy men, had sallied forth to harass the Moorish country, during its present distracted state; and having ravaged the valleys of the Sierra Nevada, or snowy mountains, were returning to Alhama, in gay spirits, and laden with booty.

As El Zagal passed through the neighbourhood of Alhama, he recollected the ancient perils of the road, and sent light corradors in advance, to inspect each rock and ravine where a foe might lurk in ambush. One of these scouts, overlooking a narrow valley, which

opened upon the road, descried a troop of horsemen, on the banks of a little stream. They were dismounted, and had taken the bridles from their steeds, that they might crop the fresh grass on the banks of the river. The horsemen were scattered about; some reposing in the shade of rocks and trees; others gambling for the spoil they had taken. Not a sentinel was posted to keep guard; every thing showed the perfect security of men, who consider themselves beyond the reach of danger.

These careless cavaliers were, in fact, the knights of Calatrava, with a part of their companions in arms, returning from their foray. A part of their force had passed on with the cavalgada; ninety of the principal cavaliers had halted, to repose and refresh themselves in this valley. El Zagal smiled with ferocious joy, when he heard of their negligent security. "Here will be trophies," said he, "to grace our entrance into Alhama." Approaching the valley with cautious silence, he wheeled into it at full speed, at the head of his troop, and attacked the Christians so suddenly and furiously, that they had not time to put the bridles upon their horses, or

even to leap into the saddles. They made a confused but valiant defence, fighting among the rocks, and in the rugged bed of the river. Their defence was useless; seventy-nine were slain, the remaining eleven were taken prisoners.

A party of the Moors galloped in pursuit of the cavalgada: they soon overtook it, winding slowly up a hill. The horsemen, who convoyed it, perceiving the enemy at a distance, made their escape, and left the spoil to be retaken by the Moors.

El Zagal gathered together his captives and his booty, and proceeded, elate with success, to Granada. He paused before the gate of Elvira; for as yet he had not been proclaimed king. This ceremony was immediately performed; for the fame of his recent exploit had preceded him, and had intoxicated the minds of the giddy populace.

He entered Granada in a sort of triumph. The eleven captive knights of Calatrava walked in front. Next were paraded the ninety captured steeds, bearing the armour and weapons of their late owners, and mounted by as many Moors. Then came seventy Moorish horse-

men, with as many Christian heads hanging at their saddle bows. Muley Abdalla el Zagal followed, surrounded by a number of distinguished cavaliers, richly attired; and the pageant was closed by a long cavalgada of the flocks, and herds, and other booty, recovered from the Christians *.

The populace gazed with almost savage triumph at these captive cavaliers, and the gory heads of their companions; knowing them to have been part of the formidable garrison of Alhama, so long the scourge of Granada, and the terror of the vega. They hailed this petty triumph as an auspicious opening of the reign of their new monarch. For several days the names of Muley Aben Hassan and Boabdil el Chico were never mentioned but with contempt; and the whole city resounded with the praises of El Zagal, or "the valiant."

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 62. Mariana, Hist. España. Abarca, Anales de Aragon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

How the Count de Cabra attempted to capture another king, and how he fared in his attempt.

The elevation of a bold and active veteran to the throne of Granada, in place of its late bedridden king, made a vast difference in the aspect of the war, and called for some blow, that should dash the confidence of the Moors in their new monarch, and animate the Christians to fresh exertions.

Don Diego de Cordova, the brave Count de Cabra, was at this time in his castle of Vaena, where he kept a wary eye upon the frontier. It was now the latter part of August; and he grieved, that the summer should pass away without any inroad into the country of the foe. He sent out his scouts on the prowl, and they brought him word, that the important post of Moclin was but weakly garrisoned. This was a castellated town, strongly situate upon a high mountain, partly surrounded by thick

forests, and partly girdled by a river. It defended one of the rugged and solitary passes by which the Christians were wont to make their inroads, insomuch that the Moors, in their figurative way, denominated it the shield of Granada.

The Count de Cabra sent word to the monarchs of the feeble state of the garrison, and gave it as his opinion, that, by a secret and rapid expedition, the place might be surprised. King Ferdinand asked the advice of his counsellors. Some cautioned him against the sanguine temperament of the count, and his heedlessness of danger. Moclin, they observed, was near to Granada, and might be promptly reinforced. The opinion of the count, however, prevailed; the king considering him almost infallible in matters of border warfare, since his capture of Boabdil el Chico.

The king departed from Cordova, therefore, and took post at Alcala la Real, for the purpose of being near to Moclin. The queen also proceeded to Vaena, accompanied by her children, Prince Juan and the Princess Isa-

bella, and her great counsellor in all matters, public and private, spiritual and temporal, the venerable grand cardinal of Spain.

Nothing could exceed the pride and satisfaction of the loyal Count de Cabra, when he saw this stately train winding along the dreary mountain roads, and entering the gates of Vaena. He received his royal guests with all due ceremony, and lodged them in the best apartments that the warrior castle afforded; being the same that had formerly been occupied by the royal captive Boabdil.

King Ferdinand had concerted a wary plan to ensure the success of the enterprise. The Count de Cabra and Don Martin Alonzo de Montemayor were to set forth with their troops, so as to reach Moclin by a certain hour, and to intercept all who should attempt to enter, or should sally from the town. The master of Calatrava, the troops of the grand cardinal, commanded by the Count of Buendia, and the forces of the Bishop of Jaen, led by that belligerent prelate, amounting in all to four thousand horse and six thousand foot, were to set off in time to cooperate with the

Count de Cabra, so as to surround the town. The king was to follow with his whole force, and encamp before the place.

And here the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida breaks forth into a triumphant eulogy of the pious prelates, who thus mingled personally in these scenes of warfare. "As this was a holy crusade," says he, "undertaken for the advancement of the faith, and the glory of the church, so was it always countenanced and upheld by saintly men. For the victories of their most catholic majesties were not followed, like those of more worldly sovereigns, by erecting castles and towers, and appointing alcaydes and garrisons, but by founding of convents and cathedrals, and the establishment of wealthy bishopricks. Wherefore their majesties were always surrounded, in court or camp, in the cabinet or in the field, by a crowd of ghostly advisers, inspiriting them to the prosecution of this most righteous war. Nay, the holy men of the church did not scruple, at times, to buckle on the cuirass over the cassock, to exchange the crosier for the lance; and thus, with corporal hands, and

temporal weapons, to fight the good fight of the faith."

But to return from this rhapsody of the worthy friar. The Count de Cabra, being instructed in the complicated arrangements of the king, marched forth at midnight, to execute them punctually. He led his troops by the little river, which winds below Vaena, and so up the wild defiles of the mountains; marching all night, and stopping only in the heat of the following day, to repose under the shadowy cliffs of a deep barranca, calculating to arrive at Moclin exactly in time to cooperate with the other forces.

The troops had scarcely stretched themselves on the earth to take repose, when a scout arrived, bringing word, that El Zagal had suddenly sallied out of Granada, with a strong force, and had encamped in the vicinity of Moclin. It was plain, that the wary Moor had received information of the intended attack. This, however, was not the idea, that presented itself to the mind of the Count de Cabra. He had captured one king: here was a fair opportunity to secure another. What a

triumph, to lodge a second captive monarch in his castle of Vaena! What a prisoner to deliver into the hands of his royal mistress! Fired with the thought, the good count forgot all the arrangements of the king; or rather, blinded by former success, he trusted every thing to courage and fortune; and thought, that, by one bold swoop, he might again bear off the royal prize, and wear his laurels without competition. His only fear was, that the master of Calatrava, and the belligerent bishop, might come up in time to share the glory of the victory. So ordering every one to horse, this hot spirited cavalier pushed on for Moclin, without allowing his troops the necessary time for repose *.

The evening closed as the count arrived in the neighbourhood of Moclin. It was the full of the moon, and a bright and cloudless night. The count was marching through one of those deep valleys or ravines, worn in the Spanish mountains by the brief but tremendous torrents, which prevail during the autumnal

* Mariana, lib. xxv. c. 17. Abarca. Zurita, &c.

rains. It was walled, on both sides, by lofty and almost perpendicular cliffs; but the strong gleams of moonlight, that penetrated to the bottom of the glen, glittered on the armour of the squadrons, as they silently passed through it. Suddenly the war-cry of the Moors rose in various parts of the valley. "El Zagal! El Zagal!" was shouted from every cliff, accompanied by showers of missiles, that struck down several of the Christian warriors. The count lifted up his eyes, and beheld, by the light that prevailed, every cliff glistening with Moorish soldiery. The deadly shower fell thickly round him; and the shining armour of his followers made them fair objects for the aim of the enemy. The count saw his brother Gonzalo struck dead by his side; his own horse sunk under him, pierced by four Moorish lances; and he received a wound in the hand from an arquebuse. He remembered the horrible massacre of the mountains of Malaga, and feared a similar catastrophe. There was no time to pause. His brother's horse, freed from his slaughtered rider, was running at large; seizing the reins, he sprang into the

saddle, called upon his men to follow him, and, wheeling round, retreated out of the fatal valley.

The Moors, rushing down from the heights, pursued the retreating Christians. The chase endured for a league; but it was a league of rough and broken ground, where the Christians had to turn and fight at almost every step. In these short but fierce combats, the enemy lost many cavaliers of note; but the loss of the Christians was infinitely more grievous, comprising numbers of the noblest warriors of Vaena and its vicinity. Many of the Christians, disabled by wounds, or exhausted by fatigue, turned aside, and endeavoured to conceal themselves among rocks and thickets, but never more rejoined their companions; being slain or captured by the Moors, or perishing in their wretched retreats.

The arrival of the troops, led by the master of Calatrava and the bishop of Jaen, put an end to the rout. El Zagal contented himself with the laurels he had gained; and, ordering the trumpets to call off his men from the pursuit, returned in great triumph to Moclin *.

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 4. Pulgar, Cronica.

Queen Isabella was at Vaena, awaiting, in great anxiety, the result of the expedition. She was in a stately apartment of the castle, looking towards the road that winds through the mountains from Moclin, and regarding the watchtowers that crowned the neighbouring heights, in hopes of favourable signals. The prince and princess, her children, were with her, and her venerable counsellor, the grand cardinal. All shared in the anxiety of the moment. At length couriers were seen riding toward the town. They entered its gates; but, before they reached the castle, the nature of their tidings was known to the queen, by the shrieks and wailings that rose from the streets below. The messengers were soon followed by wounded fugitives, hastening home to be relieved, or to die among their friends and families. The whole town resounded with lamentations, for it had lost the flower of its youth, and its bravest warriors. Isabella was a woman of courageous soul, but her feelings were overpowered by the spectacle of wo which presented itself on every side. Her maternal heart mourned over the death of so many loyal subjects, who, so shortly

before, had rallied round her with devoted affection; and, losing her usual self command, she sunk into deep despondency.

In this gloomy state of mind, a thousand apprehensions crowded upon her. She dreaded the confidence which this success would impart to the Moors. She feared, also, for the important fortress of Alhama, the garrison of which had not been reinforced since its foraging party had been cut off by this same El Zagal. On every side the queen saw danger and disaster, and feared, that a general rout was about to attend the Castilian arms.

The grand cardinal comforted her with both spiritual and worldly counsel. He told her to recollect, that no country was ever conquered, without occasional reverses to the conquerors; that the Moors were a warlike people, fortified in a rough and mountainous country, where they never could be conquered by her ancestors; and that, in fact, her armies had already, in three years, taken more cities than those of any of her predecessors had been able to do in twelve. He concluded by offering to take the field, with three thousand cavalry, his own retainers, paid and maintained

by himself, and either hasten to the relief of Alhama, or undertake any other expedition her majesty might command. The discreet words of the cardinal soothed the spirit of the queen, who always looked to him for consolation, and she soon recovered her usual equanimity.

Some of the counsellors of Isabella, of that politic class who seek to rise by the faults of others, were loud in their censures of the rashness of the count. The queen defended him with prompt generosity. "The enterprise," said she, "was rash; but not more rash than that of Lucena, which was crowned with success, and which we have all applauded, as the height of heroism. Had the Count de Cabra succeeded in capturing the uncle, as he did the nephew, who is there that would not have praised him to the skies?"

The magnanimous words of the queen put a stop to all invidious remarks in her presence; but certain of the courtiers, who had envied the count the glory gained by his former achievements, continued to magnify, among themselves, his present imprudence; and we are told by Fray Antonio Agapida, that they

sneeringly gave the worthy cavalier the appellation of "Count de Cabra, the king catcher."

Ferdinand had reached the place on the frontier called the Fountain of the King, within three leagues of Moclin, when he heard of the late disaster. He greatly lamented the precipitation of the count, but forbore to express himself with severity; for he knew the value of that loyal and valiant cavalier*. He held a council of war, to determine what course was to be pursued. Some of his cavaliers advised him to abandon the attempt upon Moclin, the place being strongly reinforced, and the enemy inspirited by his recent victory. Certain old Spanish hidalgos reminded him, that he had but a few Castilian troops in his army, without which stanch soldiery his predecessors never presumed to enter the Moorish territory; while others remonstrated, that it would be beneath the dignity of the king to retire from an enterprise on account of the defeat of a single cavalier and his retainers. In this way, the king was distracted by a

* Abarca, Anales de Aragon.

multitude of counsellors; when fortunately a letter from the queen put an end to his perplexities. Proceed we, in the next chapter, to relate what was the purport of that letter.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Expedition against the castles of Cambil and Albahar.

"HAPPY are those princes," exclaims the worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida, "who have women and priests to advise them; for in these dwelleth the spirit of council!" While Ferdinand and his captains were confounding each other in their deliberations at the Fountain of the King, a quiet but deep little council of war was held, in the state apartment of the old castle of Vaena, between Queen Isabella, the venerable Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, grand cardinal of Spain, and Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent bishop of Jaen. This last worthy prelate, who had exchanged his mitre for a helm, no sooner beheld the defeat of the enterprise against Moclin, than he turned the reins of his sleek, stall fed steed, and hastened back to Vaena, full of a project for the employment of the army, the advancement of the faith, and the benefit of his own diocese. He

knew, that the actions of the king were influenced by the opinions of the queen; and that the queen always inclined a listening ear to the counsels of saintly men. He laid his plans, therefore, with the customary wisdom of his cloth, to turn the ideas of the queen into the proper channel; and this was the purport of the worthy bishop's suggestions.

The bishoprick of Jaen had for a long time been harassed by two Moorish castles, the scourge and terror of all that part of the country. They were situate on the frontiers of the kingdom of Granada, about four leagues from Jaen, in a deep, narrow, and rugged valley, surrounded by lofty mountains. Through this valley runs the Rio Frio, or "cold river," in a deep channel, between high precipitous rocks. On each side of the stream rise two vast rocks, nearly perpendicular, within a stone's throw of each other; blocking up the narrow gorge of the valley. On the summits of these rocks stood the two formidable castles of Cambil and Albahar, fortified with battlements and towers of great height and thickness. They were connected together by a bridge, thrown from rock to rock across the

river. The road which passed through the valley traversed this bridge, and was completely commanded by these castles. They stood like two giants of romance, guarding the pass and dominating the valley.

The kings of Granada, knowing the importance of these castles, kept them always well garrisoned and victualled, to stand a siege; with fleet steeds and hard riders, to forage the country of the Christians. The warlike race of the Abencerrages, the troops of the royal household, and others of the choicest chivalry of Granada, made them their strong holds, from whence to sally forth on those predatory and roving enterprises, which were the delight of the Moorish cavaliers. As the wealthy bishoprick of Jaen lay immediately at hand, it suffered more peculiarly from these marauders. They drove off the fat beeves, and the flocks of sheep from the pastures, and swept the labourers from the field. They scoured the country to the very gates of Jaen; so that the citizens could not venture from their walls without the risk of being borne off captive to the dungeons of these castles.

The worthy bishop, like a good pastor,

beheld, with grief of heart, his fat bishoprick daily waxing leaner and leaner, and poorer and poorer; and his holy ire was kindled at the thought, that the possessions of the church should thus be at the mercy of a crew of infidels.

It was the urgent counsel of the bishop, therefore, that the military force thus providentially assembled in the neighbourhood, since it was apparently foiled in its attempt upon Moclin, should be turned against these insolent castles, and the country delivered from their domination. The grand cardinal supported the suggestion of the bishop, and declared, that he had long meditated the policy of a measure of the kind. Their united opinions found favour with the queen, and she despatched a letter on the subject to the king. It came just in time to relieve him from the distraction of a multitude of counsellors, and he immediately undertook the reduction of the castles.

The Marquis of Cadiz was, accordingly, sent in advance, with two thousand horse, to keep watch upon the garrisons, and prevent all entrance or exit until the king should arrive

with the main army and the battering artillery. The queen, to be near at hand in case of need, moved her quarters to the city of Jaen, where she was received with martial honours by the belligerent bishop, who had buckled on his cuirass, and girded on his sword, to fight in the cause of his diocese.

In the mean time, the Marquis of Cadiz arrived in the valley, and completely shut up the Moors within their walls. The castles were under the command of Mahomet Lentin ben Usef, an Abencerrage, and one of the bravest cavaliers of Granada. In his garrisons were many troops of the fierce African tribe of Gomeres. Mahomet Lentin, confident in the strength of his fortresses, smiled, as he looked down from his battlements, upon the Christian cavalry, perplexed in the rough and narrow valley. He sent forth skirmishing parties to harass them; and there were many sharp combats between small parties and single knights; but the Moors were driven back to the castles; and all attempts to send intelligence of their situation to Granada were intercepted by the vigilance of the Marquis of Cadiz.

At length the legions of the royal army came pouring, with fluttering banner and vaunting trumpet, along the defiles of the mountains. They halted before the castles; but the king could not find room, in the narrow and rugged valley, to form his camp; he had to divide it into three parts, which were posted on different heights, and his tents whitened the sides of the neighbouring hills. When the encampment was formed, the army remained gazing idly at the castles. The artillery was upwards of four leagues in the rear, and without artillery all attack would be in vain.

The alcayde, Mahomet Lentin, knew the nature of the road by which the artillery had to be brought. It was merely a rugged path, at times scaling almost perpendicular crags and precipices, up which it was utterly impossible for wheel carriages to pass; neither was it in the power of man or beast to draw up the lombards and other ponderous ordnance. He felt assured, therefore, that they never could be brought to the camp; and, without their aid, what could the Christians effect against his rock-built castles? He scoffed at them, therefore, as he saw their tents by

day, and their fires by night, covering the surrounding heights. "Let them linger here a little while longer," said he, "and the autumnal torrents will wash them from the mountains."

While the alcayde was thus closely mewed up within his walls, and the Christians lay inactive in their camp, he noticed, one calm autumnal day, the sound of implements of labour echoing among the mountains, and now and then the crash of a fallen tree, or a thundering report, as if some rock had been heaved from its bed, and hurled into the valley. The alcayde was on the battlements of his castle, surrounded by his knights. "Methinks," said he, "these Christians are making war upon the rocks and trees of the mountains, since they find our castles unassailable."

The sounds did not cease even during the night; every now and then, the Moorish sentinel, as he paced the battlements, heard some crash echoing among the heights. The return of day explained the mystery. Scarcely did the sun shine against the summits of the mountains, than shouts burst from the cliffs

opposite to the castles, and were answered from the camp with joyful sound of kettle-drums and trumpets.

The astonished Moors lifted up their eyes, and beheld, as it were, a torrent of war breaking out of a narrow defile. There was a multitude of men with pickaxes, spades, and bars of iron, clearing away every obstacle, while behind them slowly moved along great teams of oxen, dragging heavy ordnance, and all the munitions of battering warfare.

"What cannot women and priests effect, when they unite in counsel!" exclaims again the worthy Antonio Agapida. The queen had held another consultation with the grand cardinal, and the belligerent bishop of Jaen. It was clear, that the heavy ordnance could never be conveyed to the camp by the regular road of the country, and on this must depend every hope of success. It was suggested, however, by the zealous bishop, that another road might be opened through a more practicable part of the mountains. It would be an undertaking extravagant and chimerical with ordinary means, and, therefore,

unlooked for by the enemy; but what could not kings do, who had treasures and armies at command?

The project struck the enterprising spirit of the queen. Six thousand men, with pickaxes, crowbars, and every other necessary implement, were set to work, day and night, to break a road through the very centre of the mountains. No time was to be lost; for it was rumoured, that El Zagal was about to march with a mighty host to the relief of the castles. The bustling Bishop of Jaen acted as pioneer, to mark the route and superintend the labourers; and the grand cardinal took care, that the work should never languish through lack of money*.

"When kings' treasures," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "are dispensed by priestly hands, there is no stint, as the glorious annals of Spain bear witness." Under the guidance of these ghostly men, it seemed as if miracles were effected. Almost an entire mountain was levelled, valleys filled up, trees hewn down, rocks broken and overturned; in short,

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon, lib. xx. c. 64. Pulgar, part iii. c. 51.

all the obstacles, which nature had heaped around, entirely and promptly vanquished. In little more than twelve days this gigantic work was accomplished, and the ordnance dragged to the camp, to the great triumph of the Christians, and confusion of the Moors*.

No sooner was the heavy artillery arrived, than it was disposed in all haste upon the neighbouring heights. Francisco Ramirez de Madrid, the first engineer in Spain, superintended the batteries, and soon opened a destructive fire upon the castles.

When the valiant alcayde, Mahomet Lentin, found his towers tumbling about him, and his bravest men dashed from the walls, without the power of inflicting a wound upon the foe, his haughty spirit was greatly exasperated. "Of what avail," said he, "is all the prowess of knighthood against these cowardly engines, that murder from afar?"

For a whole day a tremendous fire kept thundering upon the castle of Albahar. The lombards discharged large stones, which demolished two of the towers, and all the battle-

* Zurita, Anales de Aragon, lib. xx. c. 64. Pulgar, part iii. c. 51.

ments which guarded the portal. If any Moors attempted to defend the walls, or repair the breaches, they were shot down by ribadoquines, and other small pieces of artillery. The Christian soldiery issued forth from the camp, under cover of this fire, and, approaching the castles, discharged flights of arrows and stones through the openings made by the ordnance.

At length, to bring the siege to a conclusion, Francisco Ramirez elevated some of the heaviest artillery on a mount, that rose in form of a cone or pyramid, on the side of the river near to Albahar, and commanded both castles. This was an operation of great skill and excessive labour, but it was repaid by complete success; for the Moors did not dare to wait until this terrible battery should discharge its fury. Satisfied that all further resistance was vain, the valiant alcayde made signal for a parley. The articles of capitulation were soon arranged. The alcayde and his garrison were permitted to return in safety to the city of Granada, and the castles were delivered into the possession of King Ferdinand, on the day of the festival of St.

Matthew, in the month of September. They were immediately repaired, strongly garrisoned, and given in charge to the city of Jaen.

The effects of this triumph were immediately apparent. Quiet and security once more settled upon the bishoprick. The husbandmen tilled their fields in peace, the herds and flocks fattened unmolested in the pastures, and the vineyards yielded corpulent skinsful of rosy wine. The good bishop enjoyed, in the gratitude of his people, the approbation of his conscience, the increase of his revenues, and the abundance of his table, a reward for all his toils and perils. "This glorious victory," exclaims Fray Antonio Agapida, "achieved by such extraordinary management and infinite labour, is a shining example of what a bishop can effect for the promotion of the faith, and the good of his diocese."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Enterprise of the knights of Calatrava against Zalea.

While these events were taking place on the northern frontier of the kingdom of Granada, the important fortress of Alhama was neglected, and its commander, Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava *, reduced to great perplexity. The remnant of the foraging party, which had been surprised and massacred by the fierce El Zagal, when on his way to Granada to receive the crown, had returned in confusion and dismay to the fortress. They could only speak of their own disgrace, being obliged to abandon their cavalgada, and to fly, pursued by a superior force. Of the flower of their party, the gallant knights of Calatrava, who had remained behind in the valley, they

* Clavero of Calatrava is he who bears the keys of the castle, convents, and archives of the order. It is an office of great honour and distinction.

knew nothing. A few days cleared up the mystery, and brought tidings of their steeds, led in triumph into the gates of Granada; and their bleeding heads, borne at the saddlebows of the warriors of El Zagal. Their fellow knights, who formed a part of the garrison, were struck with horror at the dismal story, and panted to revenge their death. Their number, however, was too much reduced by this loss to take the field; for the vega swarmed with the troops of El Zagal. They could not even venture forth to forage for provisions; and the defeat of the Count de Cabra having interrupted their customary supplies, they were reduced to such extremity, that they had to kill several of their horses for food.

Don Gutiere de Padilla, clavero of Calatrava, the commander of the fortress, was pondering one day over the gloomy state of affairs, when a Moor was brought before him, who had applied at the gate for an audience. He bore a budget, and appeared to be one of those itinerant merchants, who wandered about the country in those days, hanging on the skirts of armies, to purchase the spoils of the soldiery, and who would pretend to sell

amulets, trinkets, and perfumes, but would often draw forth from their wallets articles of great rarity and value: rich shawls, chains of gold, necklaces of pearls and diamonds, and costly gems, the plunder of camps and cities. The Moor approached the clavero with a mysterious look. "Senior," said he, "I would speak with you alone; I have a precious jewel to dispose of." "I need no jewels," said the clavero, abruptly; "take thy wares to the soldiery." "By the blood of him who died on the cross," exclaimed the Moor, with earnest solemnity, "do not turn a deaf ear to my offer: the jewel I have to sell would be to you of inestimable value, and you alone can be the purchaser."

The clavero was moved by the earnestness of the Moor, and perceived, that, under the figurative language common to his countrymen, he concealed some meaning of importance. He made a sign, therefore, to his attendants to withdraw. The Moor looked after them, until the door closed; then, advancing cautiously, "What will you give me," said he, "if I deliver the fortress of Zalea into your hands?"

Zalea was a strong town, about two leagues distant, which had long been a hostile and dangerous neighbour to Alhama; its warriors laying frequent ambuscades to surprise the knights of Calatrava, when out upon a forage, and to intercept and cut off their supplies and cavalgadas.

The clavero looked with mingled surprise and distrust at this itinerant pedler, who thus offered to traffic for a warlike town. "Thou talkest," said he, "of selling me Zalea; what means hast thou of making good the sale?" "I have a brother in the garrison," replied the Moor, "who, for a proper sum paid down, will admit a body of troops by night into the citadel."

"And for a sum of gold, then," said the clavero, regarding him with stern scrutiny, "thou art prepared to betray thy people and thy faith?"

"I abjure them and their faith," replied the Moor: "my mother was a Castilian captive; her people shall be my people, and her religion my religion."

The cautious clavero still distrusted the sincerity of this mongrel Moor and piebald

Christian. "What assurance," continued he, "have I, that thou wilt deal more truly with me, than with the alcayde of the fortress thou wouldst betray? To me thou hast no tie of fealty, to him thou owest thy allegiance."

"I owe him no allegiance!" cried the Moor, fire flashing from his eyes: "the alcayde is a tyrant, a dog! he has robbed me of my merchandise, stripped me of my lawful booty, and ordered me the bastinado, because I dared to complain. May the curse of God light upon me, if I rest contented, until I have ample vengeance!"

"Enough," said the clavero; "I will trust to thy vengeance, even more than to thy Christianity."

Don Gutiere now summoned a counsel of his principal knights. They were all eager for the enterprise, as a mode of revenging the death of their companions, and wiping off the stigma cast upon the order by the late defeat. Spies were sent to reconnoitre Zalea, and to communicate with the brother of the Moor; the sum to be paid as a recompense was adjusted, and every arrangement made for the enterprise.

On the appointed night, a party of cavaliers set out under the guidance of the Moor. When they came near to Zalea, their leader bound the hands of the guide behind his back, and pledged his knightly word to strike him dead on the least sign of treachery; he then bade him lead the way. It was midnight, when they arrived in silence under the walls of the citadel. At a low signal, a ladder of ropes was let down: Gutierre Muñoz and Pedro de Alvarado were the first to ascend, followed by half a dozen others. They surprised the guards, cut them down, threw them over the wall, and gained possession of a tower. The alarm was given, the whole citadel was in confusion, but already the knights of Calatrava were in every part. They called to each other to remember their brethren massacred in the valley of the vega, and their bloody heads borne in triumph to Granada. They fought with sanguinary fury; most of the half armed and bewildered garrison were put to the sword; the rest were taken prisoners; in an hour they were masters of the citadel, and the town submitted of course. They found the magazines stored

with all kinds of provisions, with which they loaded an immense train of beasts of burden, for the relief of the famishing garrison of Alhama.

Thus did the gallant knights of Calatrava gain the strong town of Zalea, with scarcely any loss, and atone for the inglorious defeat sustained by their companions. Large reinforcements and supplies from the sovereigns arriving soon after, strengthened them in their own fortress, and enabled them to keep possession of their new conquest. This gallant affair took place about the same time as the capture of Cambil and Alachar; and these two achievements gave a prosperous termination to the chequered events of this important year. Ferdinand and Isabella retired for the winter to Alcada de Henares, where the queen, on the 16th of December, gave birth to the infanta Catherine, afterwards spouse to Henry VIII. of England.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Death of old Muley Aben Hassan.

THE personal exploits with which El Zágal had commenced his reign, in surprising the knights of Calatrava, and defeating the Count de Cabra, had given him a transient popularity, which he had promoted by feasts and tournaments, and other public rejoicings, in which the Moors delighted. Knowing, however, the uncertain nature of the people over whom he reigned, he feared some capricious revolution in favour of his deposed brother, Muley Aben Hassan. That once fiery old monarch was now blind and bedridden, and lived in a kind of durance in the city of Almuneçar. He was treated, however, with deference and attention; for the garrison had been originally appointed by himself. El Zagal, having now a little leisure during the interval of the campaigns, became suddenly solicitous about the death of his brother, and

had him removed to Salobreña, for the benefit of purer and more salubrious air.

The small town of Salobreña was situate on a lofty hill, that rose out of the centre of a beautiful and fertile valley on the Mediterranean coast. It was protected by a strong castle, built by the Moorish kings, as a place of deposit for their treasures. Here also they sent such of their sons and brothers as might endanger the security of their reign. They lived here, prisoners at large, in a state of voluptuous repose, under a serene sky, in a soft climate and luxuriant valley. The palace was adorned with fountains, and delicious gardens, and perfumed baths; a harem of beauties was at the command of the royal captives, and music and the dance beguiled the lagging hours. Nothing was denied them but the liberty to depart; that alone was wanting, to render the abode a perfect paradise.

Notwithstanding the extreme salubrity of the air, and the assiduous attentions of the commander, who was devoted to El Zagal, and had been particularly charged by him to be

watchful over the health of his brother, the old monarch had not been here many days before he expired. There was nothing surprising in this event; for life with him had long glimmered in the socket: but the measures immediately taken by El Zagal roused the suspicions of the public. With indecent haste, he ordered, that the treasures of the deceased should be packed upon mules, and conveyed to Granada, where he took possession of them, to the exclusion of the children. The sultana Zorayna, and her two sons, were imprisoned in the Alhambra, in the tower of Comares; the same place, where, by her instigation, the virtuous Ayxa la Horra and her son Boabdil had once been confined. There she had leisure to ruminate on the disappointment of all her schemes, perfidiously executed, for the advancement of those sons, who were her fellow prisoners. The corpse of old Muley Aben Hassan was also brought to Granada; not in state, like the remains of a once powerful sovereign, but transported ignominiously on a mule. It received no funeral honours, but was borne obscurely to the grave by two

Christian captives, and deposited in the royal Osario or charnel house*.

No sooner were the people well assured, that old Muley Aben Hassan was dead and buried, than they all, with one accord, began to deplore his loss, and extol his memory. They admitted, that he had been fierce and cruel, but then he had been brave: it was true, he had pulled down this war upon their heads; but he had himself also been crushed by it. In a word, he was dead; and his death atoned for every fault: for a king, just deceased, is generally either a hero or a saint. In proportion as they ceased to hate Muley Aben Hassan, they began to hate his brother El Zagal. The manner of the old king's death, the eagerness to seize upon his treasures, the scandalous neglect of his corpse, and the imprisonment of his sultana and children, all filled the public mind with dark suspicions; and the name of El Zagal was often coupled with the epithets of fratricide, in the low murmurings of the people.

As the public must always have some leading

* Cura de los Palacios, cap. lxxvii.

person to like, as well as to hate, there began once more to be an inquiry after Boabdil el Chico. That unfortunate monarch was living at Cordova, under the shade of the cold friendship of Ferdinand, who had ceased to regard him with much attention, when he was no longer useful to his interests. No sooner, however, did the public favour once more incline towards him, than the kindness of the catholic monarch immediately revived. He furnished him with money and means again to elevate his standard, and create a division in the Moorish power. By this assistance, Boabdil established the shadow of a court, at Velez el Blanco, a strong frontier town on the confines of Murcia, where he remained, as it were, with one foot over the border, and ready to draw that back, at a moment's warning. His presence, however, gave new life to his faction in Granada. It is true, the more courtly and opulent inhabitants of the quarter of the Alhambra still rallied round the throne of El Zagal, as the great seat of power; but then the inhabitants of the albaycin, the poorest part of the community, who had nothing to risk, and nothing to lose, were

almost unanimous in favour of the indigent Boabdil. So it is in this wonderful system of sublunary affairs; the rich befriend the rich, the powerful stand by the powerful, while the poor enjoy the sterile assistance of their fellows: thus, each one seeking his kind, the admirable order of all things is maintained, and a universal harmony prevails.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Of the Christian army, which assembled at the city of Cordova.

GREAT and glorious was the style with which the catholic sovereigns opened another year's campaign of this eventful war. It was like commencing another act of a stately and heroic drama, where the curtain rises to the inspiring sound of martial melody, and the whole stage glitters with the array of warriors and the pomp of arms. The ancient city of Cordova was the place appointed by the sovereigns for the assemblage of the troops; and, early in the spring of 1486, the fair valley of the Guadalquivir resounded with the shrill blast of trumpet, and the impatient neighing of the war horse. In this splendid era of Spanish chivalry, there was a rivalship among the nobles, who most should distinguish himself by the splendour of his appearance, and the number and equipments of his feudal fol-

lowers. Every day beheld some cavalier of note, the representative of some proud and powerful house, entering the gates of Cordova with sound of trumpet, and displaying his banner and device, renowned in many a contest. He would appear in sumptuous array, surrounded by pages and lackeys, no less gorgeously attired, and followed by a host of vassals and retainers, horse and foot, all admirably equipped in burnished armour.

Such was the state of Don Inigo Lopez de Mendoza, Duke of Infantado; who may be cited as a picture of a warlike noble of those times. He brought with him five hundred men at arms of his household, equipped and mounted *a la geneta* and *a la guisa*. The cavaliers who attended him were both magnificently armed and dressed. The housings of fifty of his horses were of rich cloth, embroidered with gold; and others were of brocade. The sumpter mules had housings of the same, with halters of silk; while the bridles, headpieces, and all the harnessing, glittered with silver.

The camp equipage of these noble and luxurious warriors was equally magnificent. Their tents were gay pavilions, of various

colours, fitted up with silken hangings, and decorated with fluttering pennons. They had vessels of gold and silver for the service of their tables, as if they were about to engage in a course of stately feasts and courtly revels, instead of the stern encounters of rugged and mountainous warfare. Sometimes they passed through the streets of Cordova at night, in splendid cavalcade, with great numbers of lighted torches, the rays of which, falling upon polished armour, and nodding plumes, and silken scarfs, and trappings of golden embroidery, filled all beholders with admiration *.

But it was not the chivalry of Spain alone, which thronged the streets of Cordova. The fame of this war had spread throughout Christendom: it was considered a kind of crusade; and catholic knights from all parts hastened to signalize themselves in so holy a cause. There were several valiant cheyaliers from France, among whom the most distinguished was Gaston du Léon, seneschal of Toulouse. With him came a gallant train, well armed and mounted, and decorated with rich surcoats

* Pulgar, part iii, cap. 41. 56.

and panaches of feathers. These cavaliers, it is said, eclipsed all others in the light festivities of the court. They were devoted to the fair; but not after the solemn and passionate manner of the Spanish lovers: they were gay, gallant, and joyous, in their amours, and captivated by the vivacity of their attacks. They were at first held in light estimation by the grave and stately Spanish knights, until they made themselves to be respected by their wonderful prowess in the field.

The most conspicuous of the volunteers, however, who appeared in Cordova on this occasion, was an English knight of royal connexion. This was the Lord Scales, Earl of Rivers, related to the Queen of England, wife of Henry VII. He had distinguished himself, in the preceding year, at the battle of Bosworth Field, where Henry Tudor, then Earl of Richmond, overcame Richard III. That decisive battle having left the country at peace, the Earl of Rivers, retaining a passion for warlike scenes, repaired to the Castilian court, to keep his arms in exercise in a campaign against the Moors. He brought with him a hundred archers, all dexterous with the long

bow and the cloth yard arrow; also two hundred yeomen, armed cap à piè, who fought with pike and battleaxe; men robust of frame, and of prodigious strength.

The worthy Padre Fray Antonio Agapida describes this stranger knight and his followers with his accustomed accuracy and minuteness. "This cavalier," he observes, "was from the island of England, and brought with him a train of his vassals; men who had been hardened in certain civil wars which had raged in their country. They were a comely race of men, but too fair and fresh for warriors; not having the sunburnt, martial hue of our old Castilian soldiery. They were huge feeders, also, and deep carousers; and could not accommodate themselves to the sober diet of our troops, but must fain eat and drink after the manner of their own country. They were often noisy and unruly, also, in their wassail; and their quarter of the camp was prone to be a scene of loud revel and sudden brawl. They were withal of great pride; yet it was not like our inflammable Spanish pride: they stood not much upon the *pundonor* and high punctilio, and rarely drew the stiletto in their disputes;

but their pride was silent and contumelious. Though from a remote and somewhat barbarous island, they yet believed themselves the most perfect men upon earth; and magnified their chieftain, the Lord Scales, beyond the greatest of our grandees. With all this, it must be said of them, that they were marvellous good men in the field, dexterous archers, and powerful with the battleaxe. In their great pride and self will, they always sought to press in the advance, and take the post of danger, trying to outvie our Spanish chivalry. They did not rush forward fiercely, or make a brilliant onset, like the Moorish and Spanish troops, but they went into the fight deliberately, and persisted obstinately, and were slow to find out when they were beaten. Withal, they were much esteemed, yet little liked, by our soldiery, who considered them stanch companions in the field, yet coveted but little fellowship with them in the camp.

"Their commander, the Lord Scales, was an accomplished cavalier, of gracious and noble presence, and fair speech. It was a marvel to see so much courtesy in a knight brought up so far from our Castilian court. He was much

honoured by the king and queen, and found great favour with the fair dames about the court; who, indeed, are rather prone to be pleased with foreign cavaliers. He went always in costly state, attended by pages and esquires, and accompanied by noble young cavaliers of his country, who had enrolled themselves under his banner, to learn the gentle exercise of arms. In all pageants and festivals, the eyes of the populace were attracted by the singular bearing and rich array of the English earl and his train, who prided themselves in always appearing in the garb and manner of their country; and were indeed something very magnificent, delectable, and strange to behold."

The worthy chronicler is no less elaborate in his description of the masters of Santiago, Calatrava, and Alcantara, and their valiant knights; armed at all points, and decorated with the badges of their orders. "These," he affirms, "were the flower of Christian chivalry. Being constantly in service, they became more steadfast and accomplished in discipline than the irregular and temporary levies of the feudal nobles. Calm, solemn, and stately, they

sat like towers upon their powerful chargers. On parades, they manifested none of the show and ostentation of the other troops. Neither, in battle, did they endeavour to signalise themselves by any fiery vivacity, or desperate and vainglorious exploit; every thing with them was measured and sedate; yet it was observed, that none were more warlike in their appearance in the camp, or more terrible for their achievements in the field.

The gorgeous magnificence of the Spanish nobles found but little favour in the eyes of the sovereigns. They saw, that it caused a competition in expense, ruinous to cavaliers of moderate fortune; and they feared, that a softness and effeminacy might thus be introduced, incompatible with the stern nature of the war. They signified their disapprobation to several of the principal noblemen, and recommended a more sober and soldierlike display while in actual service.

"These are rare troops for a tourney, my lord," said Ferdinand to the Duke of Infantado, as he beheld his retainers glittering in gold and embroidery: "but gold, though gorgeous,

is soft and yielding: iron is the metal for the field."

"Sire," replied the duke, "if my men parade in gold, your majesty will find they fight with steel." The king smiled, but shook his head; and the duke treasured up his speech in his heart.

It remains now to reveal the immediate object of this mighty and chivalrous preparation; which had, in fact, the gratification of a royal pique at bottom. The severe lesson which Ferdinand had received from the veteran Ali Atar, before the walls of Loxa, though it had been of great service in rendering him wary in his attacks upon fortified places, yet rankled sorely in his mind; and he had ever since held Loxa in peculiar odium. It was, in truth, one of the most belligerent and troublesome cities on the borders; incessantly harassing Andalusia by its incursions. It also intervened between the Christian territories and Alhama, and other important places, gained in the kingdom of Granada. For all these reasons, King Ferdinand had determined to make another grand attempt upon this war-

rior city; and for this purpose he had summoned to the field his most powerful chivalry.

It was in the month of May that the king sallied from Cordova, at the head of his army. He had twelve thousand cavalry, and forty thousand foot soldiers, with crossbows, lances, and arquebuses. There were six thousand pioneers, with hatchets, pickaxes, and crowbars, for levelling roads. He took with him, also, a great train of lombards and other heavy artillery; with a body of Germans, skilled in the service of ordnance and the art of battering walls.

"It was a glorious spectacle," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "to behold this pompous pageant issuing forth from Cordova: the pennons and devices of the proudest houses of Spain, with those of gallant stranger knights, fluttering above a sea of crests and plumes; to see it slowly moving, with flash of helmet, and cuirass, and buckler, across the ancient bridge, and reflected in the waters of the Guadalquivir; while the neigh of steed, and the blast of trumpet, vibrated in the air, and resounded to the distant mountains. But, above all," concludes the good father, with his accustomed zeal, "it

was triumphant to behold the standard of the faith every where displayed; and to reflect, that this was no worldly minded army, intent upon some temporal scheme of ambition or revenge; but a Christian host, bound on a crusade to extirpate the vile seed of Mahomet from the land, and to extend the pure dominion of the church."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

How fresh commotions broke out in Granada, and how the people undertook to allay them.

WHILE perfect unity of object, and harmony of operation, gave power to the Christian arms, the devoted kingdom of Granada continued a prey to internal feuds. The transient popularity of El Zagal had declined ever since the death of his brother, and the party of Boabdil el Chico was daily gaining strength. The albaycin and the Alhambra were again arrayed against each other in deadly strife, and the streets of unhappy Granada were daily died in the blood of her children. In the midst of these dissensions, tidings arrived of the formidable army assembling at Cordova. The rival factions paused in their infatuated brawls, and were roused to a temporary sense of the common danger. They forthwith resorted to their old expedient of new modelling their government, or rather, of making and unmaking

kings. The elevation of El Zagal to the throne had not produced the desired effect. What, then, was to be done? Recall Boabdil el Chico, and acknowledge him again as sovereign? While they were in a popular tumult of deliberation, Hamet Aben Zarrax, surnamed El Santo, arose among them. This was the same wild, melancholy man, who had predicted the woes of Granada. He issued from one of the caverns of the adjacent height, which overhangs the Darro, and has since been called the Holy Mountain. His appearance was more haggard than ever; for the unheeded spirit of prophecy seemed to have turned inwardly, and preyed upon his vitals. "Beware, oh Moslems!" exclaimed he, "of men, who are eager to govern, yet are unable to protect! Why slaughter each other for El Chico or El Zagal? Let your kings renounce their contests, and unite for the salvation of Granada, or let them be deposed!"

Hamet Aben Zarrax had long been revered as a saint; he was now considered an oracle. The old men and the nobles immediately consulted together how the two rival kings might be brought to accord. They had tried most

expedients: it was now determined to divide the kingdom between them; giving Granada, Malaga, Velez Malaga, Almeria, Almunecar, and their dependencies, to El Zagal, and the residue to Boabdil el Chico. Among the cities granted to the latter, Loxa was particularly specified, with a condition, that he should immediately take command of it in person; for the council thought the favour he enjoyed with the Castilian monarchs might avert the threatened attack.

El Zagal readily accorded to this arrangement. He had been hastily elevated to the throne by an ebullition of the people, and might be as hastily cast down again. It secured him one half of a kingdom to which he had no hereditary right, and he trusted to force or fraud to gain the other half hereafter. The wily old monarch even sent a deputation to his nephew, making a merit of offering him cheerfully the half, which he had thus been compelled to relinquish, and inviting him to enter into an amicable coalition for the good of the country.

The heart of Boabdil shrunk from all connexion with a man who had sought his life,

and whom he regarded as the murderer of his kindred. He accepted one half of the kingdom as an offer from the nation, not to be rejected by a prince, who scarcely held possession of the ground he stood on. He asserted, nevertheless, his absolute right to the whole, and only submitted to the partition out of anxiety for the present good of his people. He assembled his handful of adherents, and prepared to hasten to Loxa. As he mounted his horse to depart, Hamet Aben Zarrax stood suddenly before him. "Be true to thy country and thy faith," cried he: "hold no further communication with these Christian dogs. Trust not the hollow hearted friendship of the Castilian king: he is mining the earth beneath thy feet. Choose one of two things: be a sovereign or a slave; thou canst not be both!"

Boabdil ruminated on these words: he made many wise resolutions; but he was prone always to act from the impulse of the moment, and was unfortunately given to temporize in his policy. He wrote to Ferdinand, informing him, that Loxa and certain other cities had returned to their allegiance, and

that he held them as vassal to the Castilian crown, according to their convention. He conjured him, therefore, to refrain from any meditated attack, offering free passage to the Spanish army to Malaga, or any other place under the dominion of his uncle *

Ferdinand turned a deaf ear to the entreaty, and to all professions of friendship and vassalage. Boabdil was nothing to him, but as an instrument for stirring up the flames of civil discord. He now insisted, that he had entered into a hostile league with his uncle, and had, consequently, forfeited all claims to his indulgence; and he prosecuted with the greater earnestness his campaign against the city of Loxa.

"Thus," observes the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida, "did this most sagacious sovereign act upon the text in the eleventh chapter of the evangelist St. Luke, that 'a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand.'" He had induced these infidels to waste and destroy themselves by internal dissensions, and finally cast forth the survivor. While the Moorish

* Zurita, lib. xx. c. 68.

monarchs, by their ruinous contests, made good the old Castilian proverb in cases of civil war, "El vencido vencido, y el vencidor perdido," "the conquered conquered, and the conqueror undone*

* Garibay, lib. xl. c. 33.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

How King Ferdinand held a council of war at the Rock of the Lovers.

THE royal army, on its march against Loxa, lay encamped, one pleasant evening in May, in a meadow, on the banks of the river Yeguas, around the foot of a lofty cliff, called the Rock of the Lovers. The quarters of each nobleman formed, as it were, a separate little encampment; his stately pavilion, surmounted by his fluttering pennon, rising above the surrounding tents of his vassals and retainers. A little apart from the others, as it were in proud reserve, was the encampment of the English earl. It was sumptuous in its furniture, and complete in its munitions. Archers, and soldiers armed with battleaxes, kept guard around it; while above, the standard of England rolled out its ample folds, and flapped in the evening breeze.

The mingled sounds of various tongues and nations were heard from the soldiery, as they watered their horses in the stream, or busied themselves round the fires which began to glow, here and there, in the twilight: the gay chanson of the Frenchman, singing of his amours on the pleasant banks of the Loire, or the sunny regions of the Garonne; the broad guttural tones of the German, chanting some doughty *krieger-lied*, or extolling the vintage of the Rhine; the wild romance of the Spaniard, reciting the achievements of the Cid, and many a famous passage of the Moorish wars; and the long and melancholy ditty of the Englishman, treating of some feudal hero or redoubtable outlaw of his distant island.

On a rising ground, commanding a view of the whole encampment, stood the ample and magnificent pavilion of the king, with the banner of Castile and Arragon, and the holy standard of the cross erected before it. In this tent were assembled the principal commanders of the army; having been summoned by Ferdinand to a council of war, on receiving tidings, that Boabdil had thrown himself into

Loxa, with a considerable reinforcement. After some consultation, it was determined to invest Loxa on both sides: one part of the army was to seize upon the dangerous but commanding height of Santo Albohacin, in front of the city; while the remainder, making a circuit, should encamp on the opposite side.

No sooner was this resolved upon, than the Marquis of Cadiz stood forth, and claimed the post of danger, on behalf of himself and those cavaliers, his companions in arms, who had been compelled to relinquish it by the general retreat of the army on the former siege. The enemy had exulted over them, as if driven from it in disgrace. To regain that perilous height, to pitch their tents upon it, and to avenge the blood of their valiant compeer, the master of Calatrava, who had fallen upon it, was due to their fame: the marquis demanded, therefore, that they might lead the advance, and secure the height, engaging to hold the enemy employed, until the main army should take its position on the opposite side of the city.

King Ferdinand readily granted his permission, upon which the Count de Cabra begged to be admitted to a share of the enterprise. He had always been accustomed to serve in the advance; and now that Boabdil was in the field, and a king was to be taken, he could not content himself with remaining in the rear. Ferdinand yielded his consent; for he was disposed to give the good count every opportunity to retrieve his late disaster.

The English earl, when he heard there was a work of danger in question, was eager to be of the party; but the king restrained his ardour. "These cavaliers," said he, "conceive that they have an account to settle with their pride. Let them have the enterprise to themselves, my lord: if you follow these Moorish wars long, you will find no lack of perilous service."

The Marquis of Cadiz and his companions in arms struck their tents before daybreak. They were five thousand horse, and twelve thousand foot, and they marched rapidly along the defiles of the mountains; the cavaliers being anxious to strike the blow, and get pos-

session of the height of Albohacin, before the king, with the main army, should arrive to their assistance.

The city of Loxa stands on a high hill, between two mountains, on the banks of the Xenil. To attain the height in question, the troops had to pass over a tract of country rugged and broken, and a deep valley, intersected by the canals and water courses, with which the Moors irrigated their lands. They were extremely embarrassed in this part of their march, and in imminent risk of being cut up in detail, before they could reach the height. The Count de Cabra, with his usual eagerness, endeavoured to push across this valley, in defiance of every obstacle. He, in consequence, soon became entangled with his cavalry among the canals; but his impatience would not permit him to retrace his steps, and choose a more practicable but circuitous route. Others slowly crossed another part of the valley by the aid of pontoons; while the Marquis of Cadiz, Don Alonzo de Aguilar, and the Count de Ureña, being more experienced in the ground, from their former cam-

paign, made a circuit round the bottom of the height, and, thus ascending, began to display their squadrons, and elevate their banners, on the redoubtable post, which, in the former siege, they had been compelled so reluctantly to abandon.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

How the royal army appeared before the city of Loxa, and how it was received, and of the doughty achievements of the English earl.

THE advance of the Christian army upon Loxa threw the wavering Boabdil el Chico into one of his usual dilemmas; and he was greatly perplexed between his oath of allegiance to the Spanish sovereigns, and his sense of duty to his subjects. His doubts were determined by the sight of the enemy, glittering upon the height of Albohacin, and by the clamours of the people to be led forth to battle. "Allah!" exclaimed he, "thou knowest my heart; thou knowest I have been true in my faith to this Christian monarch! I have offered to hold Loxa as his vassal, but he has preferred to approach it as an enemy: on his head be the infraction of our treaty!"

Boabdil was not wanting in courage; he only needed decision. When he had once made up his mind, he acted vigorously. The

misfortune was, he either did not make it up at all, or he made it up too late. He who decides tardily, generally acts rashly; endeavouring to compensate, by hurry of action, for slowness of deliberation. Boabdil hastily buckled on his armour, and sallied forth, surrounded by his guards, and at the head of five hundred horse, and four thousand foot, the flower of his army. Some he detached to skirmish with the Christians, who were scattered and perplexed in the valley, and to prevent their concentrating their forces; while, with his main body, he pressed forward, to drive the enemy from the height of Albohacin, before they had time to collect there in any number, or to fortify themselves in that important position.

The worthy Count de Cabra was yet entangled, with his cavalry, among the water courses of the valley, when he heard the war cries of the Moors, and saw their army rushing over the bridge. He recognised Boabdil himself by his splendid armour, the magnificent caparison of his steed, and the brilliant guard which surrounded him. The royal host swept on toward the height. An intervening hill

hid it from his sight; but loud shouts and cries, the din of drums and trumpets, and the reports of arquebuses, gave note, that the battle had begun.

Here was a royal prize in the field, and the Count de Cabra unable to share in the action! The good cavalier was in an agony of impatience. Every attempt to force his way across the valley only plunged him into new difficulties. At length, after many eager but ineffectual efforts, he was obliged to order his troops to dismount, and slowly and carefully to lead their horses back, along slippery paths, and amid plashes of mire and water, where often there was scarcely a foothold. The good count groaned in spirit, and was in a profuse sweat with mere impatience as he went, fearing the battle might be fought, and the prize won or lost, before he could reach the field. Having at length toilfully unravelled the mazes of the valley, and arrived at firmer ground, he ordered his troops to mount, and led them full gallop to the height. Part of the good count's wishes were satisfied, but the dearest were disappointed. He came in season to partake of the

very hottest of the fight, but the royal prize was no longer in the field.

Boabdil had led on his men with impetuous valour, or rather with hurried rashness. Heedlessly exposing himself in the front of the battle, he received two wounds in the very first encounter. His guards rallied round him, defended him with matchless valour, and bore him bleeding out of the action. The Count de Cabra arrived just in time to see the loyal squadron crossing the bridge, and slowly conveying their disabled monarch towards the gate of the city.

The departure of Boabdil made no difference in the fury of the contest. A Moorish warrior, dark and terrible in aspect, mounted on a black charger, and followed by a band of savage Gomeres, rushed forward to take the lead. It was Hamet el Zegri, the fierce alcayde of Ronda, with the remnant of his once redoubtable garrison. Animated by his example, the Moors renewed their assaults upon the height. It was bravely defended on one side by the Marquis of Cadiz, on another by Don Alonzo de Aguilar; and as fast as the Moors

ascended, they were driven back and dashed down the declivities. The Count de Ureña took his stand upon the fatal spot where his brother had fallen. His followers entered with zeal into the feelings of their commander; and heaps of the enemy sunk beneath their weapons, sacrifices to the manes of the lamented master of Calatrava.

The battle continued with incredible obstinacy. The Moors knew the importance of the height to the safety of the city; the cavaliers felt their honours staked to maintain it. Fresh supplies of troops were poured out of the city; some battled on the height, while some attacked the Christians who were still in the valley, and among the orchards and gardens, to prevent their uniting their forces. The troops in the valley were gradually driven back, and the whole host of the Moors swept around the Albohacin. The situation of the Marquis of Cadiz and his companions was perilous in the extreme; they were a mere handful; and while they were fighting hand to hand with the Moors who assailed the height, they were galled from a distance by the crossbows and arquebuses of a host, that

augmented each moment in number. At this critical juncture, King Ferdinand emerged from the mountains with the main body of the army, and advanced to an eminence commanding a full view of the field of action. By his side was the noble English cavalier, the Earl of Rivers. This was the first time he had witnessed a scene of Moorish warfare. He looked with eager interest at the chance medley fight before him,—the wild career of cavalry, the irregular and tumultuous rush of infantry, and Christian helm and Moorish turban intermingling in deadly struggle. His high blood mounted at the sight; and his very soul was stirred within him, by the confused war cries, the clangour of drums and trumpets, and the reports of arquebuses, that came echoing up the mountains. Seeing the king was sending a reinforcement to the field, he entreated permission to mingle in the affray, and fight according to the fashion of his country. His request being granted, he alighted from his steed. He was merely armed *en blanco;* that is to say, with morion, back piece, and breastplate; his sword was girded by his side, and in his hand he wielded a powerful battleaxe.

He was followed by a body of his yeomen, armed in like manner, and by a band of archers, with bows made of the tough English yew tree. The earl turned to his troops, and addressed them briefly and bluntly, according to the manner of his country. "Remember, my merry men all," said he, "the eyes of strangers are upon you; you are in a foreign land, fighting for the glory of God and the honour of merry old England!" A loud shout was the reply. The earl waved his battleaxe over his head. "St. George for England!" cried he; and, to the inspiring sound of this old English war cry, he and his followers rushed down to the battle, with manly and courageous hearts*.

They soon made their way into the midst of the enemy; but, when engaged in the hottest of the fight, they made no shouts or outcries. They pressed steadily forward, dealing their blows to right and left, hewing down the Moors, and cutting their way with their battleaxes, like woodmen in a forest; while

* Cura de los Palacios.

the archers, pressing into the opening they made, plied their bows vigorously, and spread death on every side.

When the Castilian mountaineers beheld the valour of the English yeomanry, they would not be outdone in hardihood. They could not vie with them in weight and bulk, but for vigour and activity they were surpassed by none. They kept pace with them, therefore, with equal heart and rival prowess, and gave a brave support to the stout islanders.

The Moors were confounded by the fury of these assaults, and disheartened by the loss of Hamet el Zegri, who was carried wounded from the field. They gradually fell back upon the bridge; the Christians followed up their advantage, and drove them over it tumultuously. The Moors retreated into the suburb, and Lord Rivers and his troops entered with them pell mell, fighting in the streets and in the houses. King Ferdinand came up to the scene of action with his royal guard, and the infidels were all driven within the city walls. Thus were the suburbs gained by the hardi-

hood of the English lord, without such an event having been premeditated*.

The Earl of Rivers, notwithstanding he had received a wound, still urged forward in the attack. He penetrated almost to the city gate, in defiance of a shower of missiles, that slew many of his followers. A stone, hurled from the battlements, checked his impetuous career. It struck him in the face, dashed out two of his front teeth, and laid him senseless on the earth. He was removed to a short distance by his men; but, recovering his senses, refused to permit himself to be taken from the suburb.

When the contest was over, the streets presented a piteous spectacle, so many of their inhabitants had died in the defence of their thresholds, or been slaughtered without resistance. Among the victims was a poor weaver, who had been at work in his dwelling at this turbulent moment. His wife urged him to fly into the city. "Why should I fly?" said the Moor, "to be reserved for hunger and slavery? I tell you, wife, I will abide here; for better is it to die quickly by the steel, than

* Cura de los Palacios, MS.

to perish piecemeal in chains and dungeons." He said no more, but resumed his occupation of weaving; and, in the indiscriminate fury of the assault, was slaughtered at his loom *.

The Christians remained masters of the field, and proceeded to pitch three encampments for the prosecution of the siege. The king, with the great body of the army, took a position on the side of the city next to Granada. The Marquis of Cadiz and his brave companions once more pitched their tents upon the height of Santo Albohácin; but the English earl planted his standard sturdily within the suburb he had taken.

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 58.

CHAPTER XL.

Conclusion of the siege of Loxa.

HAVING possession of the heights of Albohacin, and the suburb of the city, the Christians were enabled to choose the most favourable situations for their batteries. They immediately destroyed the stone bridge, by which the garrison had made its sallies; and they threw two wooden bridges across the river, and others over the canals and streams, so as to establish an easy communication between the different camps.

When all was arranged, a heavy fire was opened upon the city from various points. They threw not only balls of stone and iron, but great carcasses of fire, which burst like meteors on the houses, wrapping them instantly in a blaze. The walls were shattered, and the towers toppled down by tremendous discharges from the lombards. Through the openings thus made, they could behold the interior of

the city; houses tumbling down or in flames; men, women, and children flying in terror through the streets, and slaughtered by the shower of missiles sent through these openings from smaller artillery, and from crossbows and arquebuses.

The Moors attempted to repair the breaches; but fresh discharges from the lombards buried them beneath the ruins of the walls they were mending. In their despair, many of the inhabitants rushed forth into the narrow streets of the suburbs, and assailed the Christians with darts, cimeters, and poniards; seeking to destroy rather than defend, and heedless of death, in the confidence, that to die fighting with an unbeliever was to be translated at once to paradise.

For two nights and a day this awful scene continued; when certain of the principal inhabitants began to reflect upon the hopelessness of resistance. Their king was disabled; their principal captains were either killed or wounded; their fortifications little better than heaps of ruins. They had urged the unfortunate Boabdil to the conflict; they now clamoured for a capitulation. A parley was pro-

cured from the Christian monarch, and the terms of surrender were soon adjusted. They were to yield up the city immediately, with all their Christian captives, and to sally forth with as much of their property as they could take with them. The Marquis of Cadiz, on whose honour and humanity they had great reliance, was to escort them to Granada, to protect them from assault or robbery. Such as chose to remain in Spain were to be permitted to reside in Castile, Arragon, or Valencia. As to Boabdil el Chico, he was to do homage as vassal to King Ferdinand; but no charge was to be urged against him, of having violated his former pledge. If he should yield up all pretensions to Granada, the title of Duke of Guadix was to be assigned him, and the territory thereto annexed, provided it should be recovered from El Zagal within six months.

The capitulation being arranged, they gave as hostages the alcayde of the city, and the principal officers, together with the sons of their late chieftain, the veteran Ali Atar. The warriors of Loxa then issued forth, humbled and dejected, at having to surrender those walls, which they had so long maintained with

valour and renown; and the women and children filled the air with lamentations, at being exiled from their native homes.

Last came forth Boabdil, most truly called El Zogoybi, the unlucky. Accustomed, as he had been, to be crowned and uncrowned; to be ransomed, and treated as a matter of bargain, he had acceded of course to the capitulation. He was enfeebled by his wounds, and had an air of dejection; yet, it is said, his conscience acquitted him of a breach of faith towards the Castilian sovereigns; and the personal valour he had displayed had caused a sympathy for him among many of the Christian cavaliers. He kneeled to Ferdinand, according to the forms of vassalage, and then departed in melancholy mood for Priego, a town about three leagues distant. Ferdinand immediately ordered Loxa to be repaired and strongly garrisoned. He was greatly elated at the capture of this place, in consequence of his former defeat before its walls. He passed great encomiums upon the commanders who had distinguished themselves; and historians dwell particularly upon his visit to the tent of the English earl. His majesty consoled him for the loss of his teeth,

by the consideration, that he might otherwise have been deprived of them by natural decay: whereas the lack of them would now be esteemed a beauty rather than a defect; serving as a trophy of the glorious cause in which he had been engaged.

The earl replied, "that he gave thanks to God and to the holy Virgin for being thus honoured by a visit from the most potent king in Christendom; that he accepted, with all gratitude, his gracious consolation for the loss he had sustained; though he held it little to lose two teeth in the service of God, who had given him all."

"A speech," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "full of most courtly wit and Christian piety; and one only marvels that it should be made by a native of an island so far distant from Castile."

CHAPTER XLI.

Capture of Illora.

KING FERDINAND followed up his victory at Loxa by laying siege to the strong town of Illora. This redoubtable fortress was perched upon a high rock, in the midst of a spacious valley. It was within four leagues of the Moorish capital; and its lofty castle, keeping vigilant watch over a wide circuit of country, was termed the right eye of Granada.

The alcayde of Illora was one of the bravest of the Moorish commanders, and made every preparation to defend his fortress to the last extremity. He sent the women and children, the aged and infirm, to the metropolis. He placed barricadoes in the suburbs, opened doors of communication from house to house, and pierced their walls with loopholes, for the discharge of crossbows, arquebuses, and other missiles.

King Ferdinand arrived before the place

with all his forces. He stationed himself upon the hill of Encinilla, and distributed the other encampments in various situations, so as to invest the fortress. Knowing the valiant character of the alcayde, and the desperate courage of the Moors, he ordered the encampments to be fortified with trenches and palisadoes, the guards to be doubled, and sentinels to be placed in all the watchtowers of the adjacent heights.

When all was ready, the Duke del Infantado demanded the attack. It was his first campaign; and he was anxious to disprove the royal insinuation made against the hardihood of his embroidered chivalry. King Ferdinand granted his demand, with a becoming compliment to his spirit. He ordered the Count de Cabra to make a simultaneous attack upon a different quarter. Both chiefs led forth their troops. Those of the duke were in fresh and brilliant armour, richly ornamented, and as yet uninjured by the service of the field. Those of the count were weatherbeaten veterans, whose armour was dinted and hacked in many a hard fought battle. The youthful duke

blushed at the contrast. "Cavaliers!" cried he, "we have been reproached with the finery of our arms: let us prove, that a trenchant blade may rest in a gilded sheath. Forward! to the foe! and I trust in God, that, as we enter this affray knights well accoutred, so we shall leave it cavaliers well proved!" His men responded by eager acclamations, and the duke led them forward to the assault. He advanced under a tremendous shower of stones, darts, balls, and arrows; but nothing could check his career. He entered the suburb sword in hand; his men fought furiously, though with great loss; for every dwelling had been turned into a fortress. After a severe conflict, they succeeded in driving the Moors into the town, about the same time that the other suburb was carried by the Count de Cabra and his veterans. The troops of the Duke del Infantado came out of the contest thinned in number, and covered with blood, and dust, and wounds. They received the highest encomiums of the king; and there was never afterwards any sneer at their embroidery.

The suburbs being taken, three batteries,

each furnished with eight large lombards, were opened upon the fortress. The damage and havock were tremendous; for the fortifications had not been constructed to withstand such engines. The towers were overthrown; the walls battered to pieces; the interior of the place was all exposed; houses demolished, and many people slain. The Moors were terrified by the tumbling ruins and the tremendous din. The alcayde had resolved to defend the place unto the last extremity. He beheld it a heap of rubbish; there was no prospect of aid from Granada; his people had lost all spirit to fight, and were vociferous for a surrender. With a reluctant heart he capitulated. The inhabitants were permitted to depart with all their effects, excepting their arms; and were escorted in safety, by the Duke del Infantado and the Count de Cabra, to the bridge of Pinos, within two leagues of Granada.

King Ferdinand gave directions to repair the fortifications of Illora, and to place it in a strong state of defence. He left, as alcayde of the town and fortress, Gonzalvo de Cordova, younger brother of Don Alonzo de Aguilar.

This gallant cavalier was captain of the royal guards of Ferdinand and Isabella, and gave already proofs of that prowess, which afterwards rendered him so renowned.

CHAPTER XLII.

Of the arrival of Queen Isabella at the camp before Moclin, and of the pleasant sayings of the English earl.

THE war of Granada, however poets may embroider it with the flowers of their fancy, was certainly one of the sternest of those iron conflicts, which have been celebrated under the name of holy wars. The worthy Fray Antonio Agapida dwells with unsated delight upon the succession of rugged mountain enterprises, bloody battles, and merciless sackings and ravages, which characterize it; yet we find him, on one occasion, pausing, in the full career of victory over the infidels, to detail a stately pageant of the catholic sovereigns.

Immediately on the capture of Loxa, Ferdinand had written to Isabella, soliciting her presence at the camp, that he might consult with her as to the disposition of their newly acquired territories.

It was in the early part of June, that the queen departed from Cordova, with the Princess Isabella, and numerous ladies of her court. She had a glorious attendance of cavaliers and pages, with many guards and domestics. There were forty mules for the use of the queen, the princess, and their train.

As this courtly cavalcade approached the Rock of the Lovers, on the banks of the river Yeguas, they beheld a splendid train of knights advancing to meet them. It was headed by that accomplished cavalier, the Marquis Duke de Cadiz, accompanied by the adelantado of Andalusia. He had left the camp the day after the capture of Illora, and advanced thus far to receive the queen, and escort her over the borders. The queen received the marquis with distinguished honour; for he was esteemed as the mirror of chivalry. His actions in this war had become the theme of every tongue, and many hesitated not to compare him in prowess to the immortal Cid *.

Thus gallantly attended, the queen entered the vanquished frontier of Granada, journeying

* Cura de los Palacios.

securely along the pleasant banks of the Xenil, so lately subject to the scourings of the Moors. She stopped at Loxa, where she administered aid and consolation to the wounded, distributing money among them for their support, according to their rank.

The king, after the capture of Illora, had removed his camp before the fortress of Moclin, with an intention of besieging it. Thither the queen proceeded, still escorted through the mountain roads by the Marquis of Cadiz. As Isabella drew near to the camp, the Duke del Infantado issued forth a league and a half to receive her, magnificently arrayed, and followed by all his chivalry in glorious attire. With him came the standard of Seville, borne by the men at arms of that renowned city, and the prior of St. Juan, with his followers. They arranged themselves in order of battle, on the left of the road by which the queen was to pass. The worthy Agapida is loyally minute in his description of the state and grandeur of the catholic sovereigns. The queen rode a chestnut mule, seated in a magnificent saddle chair, decorated with silver gilt. The housings of the mule were of fine

crimson cloth; the borders embroidered with gold; the reins and headpiece were of satin, curiously embossed with needlework of silk, and wrought with golden letters. The queen wore a brial or royal skirt of velvet, under which were others of brocade; a scarlet mantle, ornamented in the moresco fashion, and a black hat embroidered round the crown and brim.

The infanta was likewise mounted on a chestnut mule, richly caparisoned. She wore a brial or skirt of black brocade, and a black mantle, ornamented like that of the queen.

When the royal cavalcade passed by the chivalry of the Duke del Infantado, which was drawn out in battle array, the queen made a reverence to the standard of Seville, and ordered it to pass to the right hand. When she approached the camp, the multitude ran forth to meet her, with great demonstrations of joy; for she was universally beloved by her subjects. All the battalions sallied forth in military array, bearing the various standards and banners of the camp, which were lowered in salutation as she passed.

The king now appeared, in royal state,

mounted on a superb chestnut horse, and attended by many grandees of Castile. He wore a jubon or close vest of crimson cloth, with cuisses or short skirts of yellow satin; a loose cassock of brocade, a rich Moorish cimeter, and a hat with plumes. The grandees who attended him were arrayed with wonderful magnificence, each according to his taste and invention.

"These high and mighty princes," says Antonio Agapida, "regarded each other with great deference as allied sovereigns, rather than with connubial familiarity as mere husband and wife, when they approached each other: therefore, before embracing, they made three profound reverences; the queen taking off her hat, and remaining in a silk net or cawl, with her face uncovered. The king then approached, and embraced her, and kissed her respectfully on the cheek. He also embraced his daughter the princess, and, making the sign of the cross, he blessed her, and kissed her on the lips *."

The good Agapida seems scarcely to have

* Cura de los Palacios.

been more struck with the appearance of the sovereigns, than with that of the English earl. "He followed," says he, "immediately after the king, with great pomp, and in an extraordinary manner, taking precedence of all the rest. He was mounted, *à la guisa*, or with long stirrups, on a superb chestnut horse, with trappings of azure silk, which reached to the ground. The housings were of mulberry, powdered with stars of gold. He was armed in proof, and wore over his armour a short French mantle of black brocade. He had a white French hat with plumes; and carried on his left arm a small round buckler, banded with gold. Five pages attended him, apparelled in silk and brocade, and mounted on horses sumptuously caparisoned. He had also a train of followers, attired after the fashion of his country."

He advanced in a chivalrous and courteous manner, making his reverences first to the queen and infanta, and afterwards to the king. Queen Isabella received him graciously, complimenting him on his courageous conduct at Loxa, and condoling with him on the loss of his teeth. The earl, however, made light of

his disfiguring wound;* saying, that "our blessed Lord, who had built all that house, had opened a window there, that he might see more readily what passed within *." Whereupon, the worthy Fray Antonio Agapida is more than ever astonished at the pregnant wit of this island cavalier. The earl continued some little distance by the side of the royal family, complimenting them all with courteous speeches, his steed curveting and carricoling, but managed with great grace and dexterity, leaving the grandees and the people at large not more filled with admiration at the strangeness and magnificence of his state, than at the excellence of his horsemanship †.

To testify his sense of the gallantry and services of this noble English knight, who had come from so far to assist in their wars, the queen sent him, the next day, presents of twelve horses, with stately tents, fine linen, two beds, with coverings of gold brocade, and many other articles of great value.

Having refreshed himself, as it were, with

* Pietro Martyr, Epist. 61. † Cura de los Palacios.

the description of this progress of Queen Isabella to the camp, and the glorious pomp of the catholic sovereigns, the worthy Antonio Agapida returns, with renewed relish, to his pious work of discomfiting the Moors *.

* The description of this royal pageant, and the particulars concerning the English earl, agree precisely with the chronicle of Andres Bernaldes, the curate of Los Palacios. The English earl makes no further figure in this war. It appears from various histories, that he returned in the course of the year to England. In the following year, his passion for fighting took him to the Continent, at the head of four hundred adventurers, in aid of Francis, Duke of Brittany, against Louis XI. of France. He was killed, in the same year (1488), in the battle of St. Alban's, between the Bretons and the French.

CHAPTER XLIII.

How King Ferdinand attacked Moclin, and of the strange events that attended its capture.

"THE catholic sovereigns," says Fray Antonio Agapida, "had by this time closely clipped the right wing of the Moorish vulture." In other words, most of the strong fortresses along the western frontier of Granada had fallen beneath the Christian artillery. The army now lay encamped before the town of Moclin, on the frontier of Jaen, one of the most stubborn fortresses of the border. It stood on a high rocky hill, the base of which was nearly girdled by a river. A thick forest protected the back part of the town towards the mountain. Thus strongly situated it domineered, with its frowning battlements and massive towers, over all the mountain passes into that part of the country, and was called the Shield of Granada. It had a double arrear

of blood to settle with the Christians. Two hundred years before, a master of Santiago and all his cavaliers had been lanced by the Moors before its gates. It had recently made terrible slaughter among the troops of the good Count de Cabra, in his precipitate attempt to entrap the old Moorish monarch. The pride of Ferdinand had been piqued, by being obliged, on that occasion, to recede from his plan, and abandon his concerted attack on the place. He was now prepared to take a full revenge.

El Zagal, the old warrior king of Granada, anticipating a second attempt, had provided the place with ample munitions and provision; had ordered trenches to be dug, and additional bulwarks thrown up, and caused all the old men, the women, and the children, to be removed to the capital.

Such was the strength of the fortress, and the difficulties of its position, that Ferdinand anticipated much trouble in reducing it, and made every preparation for a regular siege. In the centre of his camp were two great mounds, one of sacks of flour, the other of grain, which were called the royal granary.

Three batteries of heavy ordnance were opened against the citadel and principal towers, while smaller artillery, engines for the discharge of missiles, arquebuses, and crossbows, were distributed in various places, to keep up a fire into any breach that might be made, and upon those of the garrison, who should appear on the battlements.

The lombards soon made an impression on the works, demolishing a part of the wall, and tumbling down several of those haughty towers, which, from their height, had been impregnable before the invention of gunpowder. The Moors repaired their walls as well as they were able, and, still confiding in the strength of their situation, kept up a resolute defence, firing down from their lofty battlements and towers upon the Christian camp. For two nights and a day an incessant fire was kept up, so that there was not a moment in which the roaring of ordnance was not heard, or some damage sustained by the Christians or the Moors. It was a conflict, however, more of engineers and artillerists than of gallant cavaliers; there was no sally

of troops, or shock of armed men, or rush and charge of cavalry. The knights stood looking on with idle weapons, waiting until they should have an opportunity of signalizing their prowess, by scaling the walls or storming the breaches. As the place, however, was assailable only in one part, there was every prospect of a long and obstinate resistance.

The engines, as usual, discharged not only balls of stone and iron, to demolish the walls, but flaming balls of inextinguishable combustibles, designed to set fire to the houses. One of these, which passed high through the air, like a meteor, sending out sparks, and crackling as it went, entered the window of a tower, which was used as a magazine of gunpowder. The tower blew up with a tremendous explosion; the Moors, who were upon its battlements, were hurled into the air, and fell mangled in various parts of the town; and the houses in its vicinity were rent and overthrown, as with an earthquake.

The Moors, who had never witnessed an explosion of this kind, ascribed the destruction of the tower to a miracle. Some, who had

seen the descent of the flaming ball, imagined, that fire had fallen from heaven, to punish them for their pertinacity. The pious Agapida himself believes, that this fiery missive was conducted by divine agency, to confound the infidels. An opinion in which he is supported by other catholic historians *.

Seeing heaven and earth as it were combined against them, the Moors lost all heart, and capitulated; and were permitted to depart with their effects, leaving behind all arms and munitions of war.

"The catholic army," says Antonio Agapida, "entered Moclin in solemn state, not as a licentious host, intent upon plunder and desolation, but as a band of Christian warriors, coming to purify and regenerate the land. The standard of the cross, that ensign of this holy crusade, was borne in the advance, followed by the other banners of the army. Then came the king and queen, at the head of a vast number of armed cavaliers. They were accompanied by a band of priests and friars, with the choir of the

* Pulgar. Garibay. Lucio Marino Siculo, Cosas Memorab. de Hispan. lib. xx.

royal chapel, chanting the canticle *Te Deum laudamus.* As they were moving through the streets in this solemn manner, every sound hushed, excepting the anthem of the choir, they suddenly heard, issuing as it were from under ground, a chorus of voices, chanting the solemn response, *Benedictum qui venit in nomine Domini* *. The procession paused in wonder. The sounds arose from Christian captives, and among them several priests, who were confined in subterraneous dungeons.

The heart of Isabella was greatly touched: she ordered the captives to be drawn forth from their cells, and was still more moved at beholding, by their wan, discoloured, and emaciated appearance, how much they had suffered. Their hair and beards were overgrown and shagged; they were wasted by hunger, and were half naked, and in chains. She ordered, that they should be clothed and cherished, and money furnished them to bear them to their homes †.

Several of the captives were brave cavaliers,

* Marino Siculo.

† Illescas, Hist. Pontif. lib. vi. c. 20. sect. 1.

who had been wounded and made prisoners, in the defeat of the Count de Cabra, by El Zagal, in the preceding year. There were also found other melancholy traces of that disastrous affair. On visiting the narrow pass, where the defeat had taken place, the remains of several Christian warriors were found in thickets, or hidden behind rocks, or in the clefts of the mountains. There were some, who had been struck from their horses, and wounded too severely to fly. They had crawled away from the scene of action, and concealed themselves, to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy, and had thus perished miserably and alone. The remains of those of note were known by their armour and devices, and were mourned over by their companions, who had shared the disasters of that day *.

The queen had these remains piously collected, as the relics of so many martyrs, who had fallen in the cause of the faith. They were interred, with great solemnity, in the mosques of Moclin, which had been puri-

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 61.

fied, and consecrated to Christian worship, "There," says Antonio Agapida, "rest the bones of those truly catholic knights, in the holy ground, which, in a manner, had been sanctified by their blood; and all pilgrims, passing through those mountains, offer up prayers and masses for the repose of their souls."

The queen remained for some time at Moclin, administering comfort to the wounded and the prisoners, bringing the newly acquired territory into order, and founding churches and monasteries, and other pious institutions. "While the king marched in front, laying waste the land of the Philistines," says the figurative Antonio Agapida, "Queen Isabella followed his traces, as the binder follows the reaper, gathering the rich harvest, that has fallen beneath his sickle. In this she was greatly assisted by the councils of that cloud of bishops, friars, and clergymen, besides other saintly personages, which continually surrounded her, garnering the first fruits of this infidel land into the granaries of the church." Leaving her thus piously em-

ployed, the king pursued his career of conquest, determined to lay waste the vega, and carry fire and sword to the very gates of Granada.

CHAPTER XLIV.

How King Ferdinand foraged the vega; and of the fate of the two Moorish brothers.

MULEY ABDALLA EL ZAGAL had been under a spell of ill fortune, ever since the suspicious death of the old king his brother. Success had deserted his standard, and, with his fickle subjects, want of success was one of the greatest crimes in a sovereign. He found his popularity declining, and he lost all confidence in his people. The Christian army marched in open defiance through his territories, and sat down deliberately before his fortresses; yet he dared not lead forth his legions to oppose them, lest the inhabitants of the albaycin, ever ripe for a revolt, should rise, and shut the gates of Granada against his return.

Every few days some melancholy train entered the metropolis, the inhabitants of some captured town, bearing the few effects that had been spared them, and weeping and be-

wailing the desolation of their homes. When the tidings arrived, that Illora and Moclin had fallen, the people were seized with consternation. "The right eye of Granada is extinguished!" exclaimed they; "the shield of Granada is broken! what shall protect us from the inroad of the foe?" When the survivors of the garrisons of those towns arrived, with downcast looks, bearing the marks of battle, and destitute of arms and standards, the populace reviled them in their wrath: but they answered, "We fought as long as we had force to fight, or walls to shelter us; but the Christians laid our towers and battlements in ruins, and we looked in vain for aid from Granada."

The alcaydes of Illora and Moclin were brothers; they were alike in prowess, and the bravest among the Moorish cavaliers. They had been the most distinguished in all tilts and tourneys, which graced the happier days of Granada, and had distinguished themselves in the sterner conflicts of the field. Acclamation had always followed their banners, and they had long been the delight of the people. Now, when they returned, after the capture

of their fortresses, they were followed by the unsteady populace with execrations. The hearts of the alcaydes swelled with indignation; they found the ingratitude of their countrymen still more intolerable than the hostility of the Christians. Tidings came, that the enemy was advancing with his triumphant legions, to lay waste the country about Granada. Still El Zagal did not dare to take the field. The two alcaydes of Illora and Moclin stood before him. "We have defended your fortresses," said they, "until we were almost buried under their ruins; and for our reward, we receive scoffs and revilings. Give us, O king, an opportunity in which knightly valour may signalize itself; not shut up behind stone walls, but in the open conflict of the field! The enemy approaches, to lay our country desolate. Give us men to meet him in the advance; and let shame light upon our heads, if we be found wanting in the battle!"

The two brothers were sent forth with a large force of horse and foot. El Zagal intended, should they be successful, to issue out with his whole force; and, by a decisive victory, repair the losses he had suffered.

When the people saw the well known standards of the brothers going forth to battle, there was a feeble shout; but the alcaydes passed on with stern countenances; for they knew the same voices would curse them were they to return unfortunate. They cast a farewell look upon fair Granada, and upon the beautiful fields of their infancy, as if for these they were willing to lay down their lives, but not for an ungrateful people.

The army of Ferdinand had arrived within two leagues of Granada, at the bridge of Pinos, a pass famous in the wars of the Moors and Christians for many a bloody conflict. It was the pass by which the Castilian monarchs generally made their inroads, and was capable of great defence, from the ruggedness of the country, and the difficulty of the bridge. The king, with the main body of the army, had attained the brow of a hill, when they beheld the advanced guard, under the Marquis of Cadiz and the master of Santiago, furiously attacked by the enemy, in the vicinity of the bridge. The Moors rushed to the assault with their usual shouts, but with more than usual ferocity. There was a hard struggle

at the bridge, both parties knowing the importance of the pass. The king particularly noted the prowess of two Moorish cavaliers, alike in arms and devices, and who, by their bearing and attendance, he perceived to be commanders of the enemy. They were the two brothers, the alcaydes of Illora and Moclin. Wherever they turned, they carried confusion and death into the ranks of the Christians; but they fought with desperation rather than valour. The Count de Cabra and his brother, Don Martin de Cordova, pressed forward with eagerness against them; but, having advanced too precipitately, were surrounded by the foe, and in imminent danger. A young Christian knight, seeing their peril, hastened with his followers to their relief. The king recognised him for Don Juan de Arragon, Count of Ribargoza, his own nephew; for he was illegitimate son of the Duke of Villahermosa, illegitimate brother of King Ferdinand. The splendid armour of Don Juan, and the sumptuous caparison of his steed, rendered him a brilliant object of attack. He was assailed on all sides, and his superb steed slain under him; yet still he fought valiantly, bearing

for a while the brunt of the fight, and giving the exhausted forces of the Count de Cabra time to recover breath.

Seeing the peril of these troops, and the general obstinacy of the contest, the king ordered the royal standard to be advanced, and hastened with all his forces to the relief of the Count de Cabra. At his approach the enemy gave way, and retreated towards the bridge. The two Moorish commanders endeavoured to rally their troops, and animate them to defend this pass to the utmost. They used prayers, remonstrances, menaces; but nearly in vain. They could only collect a scanty handful of cavaliers. With these they planted themselves at the head of the bridge, and disputed it inch by inch. The fight was hot and obstinate; for but few could contend hand to hand; yet many discharged crossbows and arquebuses from the banks. The river was covered with the floating bodies of the slain. The Moorish band of cavaliers was almost entirely cut to pieces; the two brothers fell, covered with wounds, upon the bridge they had so resolutely defended. They had given

up the battle for lost, but had determined not to return alive to ungrateful Granada. When the people of the capital heard how devotedly they had fallen, they lamented greatly their deaths, and extolled their memory. A column was erected to their honour in the vicinity of the bridge, which long went by the name of "The tomb of the brothers."

The army of Ferdinand now marched on, and established its camp in the vicinity of Granada. The worthy Agapida gives many triumphant details of the ravages committed in the vega, which was again laid waste; the grain, fruits, and other productions of the earth, destroyed; and that earthly paradise rendered a dreary desert. He narrates several fierce but ineffectual sallies and skirmishes of the Moors in defence of their favourite plain; among which one deserves to be mentioned, as it records the achievement of one of the saintly heroes of this war.

During one of the movements of the Christian army near the walls of Granada, a battalion of fifteen hundred cavalry, and a large force of foot, had sallied from the city, and posted

themselves near some gardens, which were surrounded by a canal, and traversed by ditches, for the purpose of irrigation.

The Moors beheld the Duke del Infantado pass by with his two splendid battalions; one of men at arms, the other of light cavalry, armed *à la geneta*. In company with him, but following as a rearguard, was Don Garcia Osorio, the belligerent bishop of Jaen, attended by Francisco Boradillo, the corregidor of his city, and followed by two squadrons of men at arms, from Jaen, Andujar, Ubeda, and Baza*. The success of the preceding year's campaign had given the good bishop an inclination for warlike affairs; and he had once more buckled on his cuirass.

The Moors were much given to stratagem in warfare. They looked wistfully at the magnificent squadrons of the Duke del Infantado; but their martial discipline precluded all attack. The good bishop promised to be a more easy prey. Suffering the duke and his troops to pass unmolested, they approached the squadrons of the bishop; and, making a pretended

* Pulgar, part iii. cap. 62.

attack, skirmished slightly, and fled in apparent confusion. The bishop considered the day his own; and, seconded by his corregidor Bovadillo, followed with valorous precipitation. The Moors fled into the *Huerta del Rey*, or orchard of the king. The troops of the bishop followed hotly after them. When the Moors perceived their pursuers fairly embarrassed among the intricacies of the garden, they turned fiercely upon them, while some of their number threw open the sluices of the Xenil. In an instant the canal which encircled, and the ditches which traversed, the garden, were filled with water, and the valiant bishop and his followers found themselves overwhelmed by a deluge*. A scene of great confusion succeeded. Some of the men of Jaen, stoutest of heart and hand, fought with the Moors in the garden, while others struggled with the water, endeavouring to escape across the canal, in which attempt many horses were drowned. Fortunately the Duke del Infantado perceived the snare into which his companions had fallen, and despatched his light cavalry to their assist-

* Pulgar.

ance. The Moors were compelled to flight, and driven along the road of Elvira up to the gates of Granada. Several Christian cavaliers perished in this affray; the bishop himself escaped with difficulty, having slipped from his saddle in crossing the canal, but saved himself by holding on the tail of his charger. This perilous achievement seems to have satisfied the good bishop's belligerent propensities. "He retired on his laurels," says Agapida, "to his city of Jaen, where, on the fruition of all good things, he gradually waxed too corpulent for his corslet, which was hung up in the hall of his episcopal palace; and we hear no more of his military deeds throughout the residue of the holy war of Granada*."

King Ferdinand having completed his ravage of the vega, and kept El Zagal shut up in his capital, conducted his army back through the pass of Lope, to rejoin Queen Isabella at Moclin. The fortresses lately taken being well

* Don Luis Osorio fué obispo de Jaen desde el año de 1483, y presidió en esta iglesia harta el de 1496 en que murió en Flandes á donde fué acompañando á la Princesa Doña Juana, esposa del Archiduque Don Felipe.—España Sagrada. Por Fr. M. Risco, tom. xli. trat. 77. cap. 4.

garrisoned and supplied, he gave the command of the frontier to his cousin, Don Fadrique de Toledo, afterwards so famous in the Netherlands as the Duke of Alba. The campaign being thus completely crowned with success, the sovereigns returned in triumph to the city of Cordova.

CHAPTER XLV.

Attempt of El Zagal upon the life of Boabdil; and how the latter was roused to action.

No sooner did the last squadron of Christian cavalry disappear behind the mountain of Elvira, and the note of its trumpets die away upon the ear, than the long suppressed wrath of old Muley el Zagal burst forth. He determined no longer to be half a king, reigning over a divided kingdom, in a divided capital; but to exterminate, by any means, fair or foul, his nephew Boabdil and his confederates. He turned furiously upon those, whose factious conduct had deterred him from sallying upon the foe. Some he punished by confiscations, others by banishment, others by death. Once undisputed monarch of the entire kingdom, he trusted to his military skill to retrieve his fortune, and drive the Christians over the frontier.

Boabdil, however, had again retired to Velez

el Blanco, on the confines of Murcia, where he could avail himself, in case of emergency, of any assistance or protection afforded him by the policy of Ferdinand. His defeat had blighted his reviving fortunes, for the people considered him as inevitably doomed to misfortune. Still, while he lived, El Zagal knew he would be a rallying point for faction, and liable, at any moment, to be elevated into power by the capricious multitude. He had recourse, therefore, to the most perfidious means to compass his destruction. He sent ambassadors to him, representing the necessity of concord, for the salvation of the kingdom; and even offering to resign the title of king, and to become subject to his sway, on receiving some estate, on which he could live in tranquil retirement. But, while the ambassadors bore these words of peace, they were furnished with poisoned herbs, which they were to administer secretly to Boabdil; and, if they failed in this attempt, they had pledged themselves to despatch him openly, while engaged in conversation. They were instigated to this treason by promises of great reward, and by assurances from the alfaquis, that Bo-

abdil was an apostate, whose death would be acceptable to Heaven.

The young monarch was secretly apprized of the concerted treason, and refused an audience to the ambassadors. He denounced his uncle as the murderer of his father and his kindred, and the usurper of his throne, and vowed never to relent in hostility to him, until he should place his head on the walls of the Alhambra.

Open war again broke out between the two monarchs, though feebly carried on, in consequence of their mutual embarrassments. Ferdinand again extended his assistance to Boabdil, ordering the commanders of his fortresses to aid him in all enterprises against his uncle, and against such places as refused to acknowledge him as king. And Don Juan de Benavides, who commanded in Loxa, even made inroads, in his name, into the territories of Almeria, Baza, and Guadix, which owned allegiance to El Zagal.

The unfortunate Boabdil had three great evils to contend with; the inconstancy of his subjects, the hostility of his uncle, and the friendship of Ferdinand. The last was by far

the most baneful; his fortunes withered under it. He was looked upon as the enemy of his faith and of his country. The cities shut their gates against him. The people cursed him. Even the scanty band of cavaliers, who had hitherto followed his ill starred banner, began to desert him; for he had not wherewithal to reward, or even to support them. His spirits sank with his fortune; and he feared, that, in a little time, he should not have a spot of earth whereon to place his standard, or an adherent to rally under it.

In the midst of his despondency, he received a message from his lion hearted mother, the sultana Ayxa la Horra. "For shame," said she, "to linger about the borders of your kingdom, when a usurper is seated in your capital! Why look abroad for perfidious aid, when you have loyal hearts beating true to you in Granada? The albaycin is ready to throw open its gates to receive you. Strike home vigorously. A sudden blow may mend all, or make an end. A throne, or a grave! for a king, there is no honourable medium."

Boabdil was of an undecided character: but there are circumstances which bring the most

wavering to a decision, and, when once resolved, they are apt to act with a daring impulse, unknown to steadier judgments. The message of the sultana roused him from a dream. Granada, beautiful Granada! with its stately Alhambra, its delicious gardens, its gushing and limpid fountains, sparkling among groves of orange, citron, and myrtle, rose before him. "What have I done," exclaimed he, "that I should be an exile from this paradise of my forefathers, a wanderer and fugitive in my own kingdom, while a murderous usurper sits proudly upon my throne? Surely, Allah will befriend the righteous cause: one blow, and all may be my own!"

He summoned his scanty band of cavaliers. "Who is ready to follow his monarch unto the death?" said he; and every one laid his hand upon his cimeter. "Enough!" said he: "let each man arm himself, and prepare his steed in secret, for an enterprise of toil and peril: if we succeed, our reward is empire!"

CHAPTER XLV*.

How Boabdil returned secretly to Granada; and how he was received.

"In the hand of God," exclaims an old Arabian chronicler, "is the destiny of princes: he alone giveth empire. A single Moorish horseman, mounted on a fleet Arabian steed, was one day traversing the mountains which extend between Granada and the frontiers of Murcia. He galloped swiftly through the valleys, but paused and looked out cautiously from the summit of every height. A squadron of cavaliers followed warily at a distance. There were fifty lances. The richness of their armour and attire showed them to be warriors of noble rank, and their leader had a lofty and princelike demeanour." The squadron thus described by the Arabian chronicler was the Moorish king Boabdil and his devoted followers.

For two nights and a day they pursued their

adventurous journey, avoiding all populous parts of the country, and choosing the most solitary passes of the mountains. They suffered severe hardships and fatigues; but they suffered without a murmur. They were accustomed to rugged campaigning, and their steeds were of generous and unyielding spirit. It was midnight, and all was dark and silent, as they descended from the mountains, and approached the city of Granada. They passed along quietly under the shadow of its walls, until they arrived near the gate of the albaycin. Here Boabdil ordered his followers to halt, and remain concealed. Taking but four or five with him, he advanced resolutely to the gate, and knocked with the hilt of his cimeter. The guards demanded who sought to enter at that unseasonable hour. "Your king!" exclaimed Boabdil: "open the gate, and admit him."

The guards held forth a light, and recognised the person of the youthful monarch. They were struck with sudden awe, and threw open the gates, and Boabdil and his followers entered unmolested. They galloped to the dwellings of the principal inhabitants of the

albaycin; thundering at their portals, and summoning them to rise, and take arms for their rightful sovereign. The summons was instantly obeyed; trumpets resounded throughout the streets; the gleam of torches and the flash of arms showed the Moors hurrying to their gathering places; and by daybreak the whole force of the albaycin was rallied under the standard of Boabdil. Such was the success of this sudden and desperate act of hardihood in a monarch; for we are assured by contemporary historians, that there had been no previous concert or arrangement. "As the guards opened the gate of the city to admit him," observes a pious chronicler, "so God opened the hearts of the Moors to receive him as their king*."

In the morning, early, the tidings of this event roused El Zagal from his slumbers in the Alhambra. The fiery old warrior assembled his guard in haste, and made his way, sword in hand, to the albaycin, hoping to come upon his nephew by surprise. He was vigorously met by Boabdil and his ad-

* Pulgar.

herents, and driven back into the quarter of the Alhambra. An encounter took place between the two kings in the square before the principal mosque. Here they fought, hand to hand, with implacable fury, as though it had been agreed to decide their competition for the crown by single combat. In the tumult of this chance medley affray, however, they were separated, and the party of El Zagal was ultimately driven from the square.

The battle raged for some time in the streets and places of the city; but, finding their powers of mischief cramped within such narrow limits, both parties sallied forth into the fields, and fought beneath the walls until evening. Many fell on both sides; and at night each party withdrew into its quarter, until the morning gave them light to renew the unnatural conflict. For several days, the two divisions of the city remained like hostile powers arrayed against each other. The party of the Alhambra was more numerous than that of the albaycin, and contained most of the nobility and chivalry; but the adherents of Boabdil were men hardened and strength-

ened by labour, and habitually skilled in the exercise of arms.

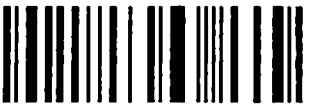
The albaycin underwent a kind of siege by the forces of El Zagal: they effected breaches in the walls, and made repeated attempts to carry it sword in hand, but were as often repulsed. The troops of Boabdil, on the other hand, made frequent sallies, and in the conflicts which took place, the hatred of the combatants rose to such a pitch of fury, that no quarter was given on either side.

Boabdil perceived the inferiority of his force. He dreaded, also, that his adherents, being for the most part tradesmen and artisans, would become impatient of this interruption of their gainful occupations, and disheartened by these continual scenes of carnage. He sent missives, therefore, in all haste, to Don Fadrique de Toledo, who commanded the Christian forces on the frontier, entreating his assistance.

Don Fadrique had received orders from the politic Ferdinand to aid the youthful monarch in all his contests with his uncle. He advanced, therefore, with a body of troops near to Granada; but, wary lest some treachery might be

intended, he stood for some time aloof, watching the movements of the parties. The furious and sanguinary nature of the conflicts, which distracted unhappy Granada, soon convinced him, that there was no collusion between the monarchs. He sent Boabdil, therefore, a reinforcement of Christian foot soldiers and arquebusiers, under Fernan Alvarez de Sotomayor, alcayde of Colomara. This was as a fire brand thrown in to light up anew the flames of war in the city, which remained raging between the Moorish inhabitants for the space of fifty days.

END OF VOL. I.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